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Sight and Sound

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film and
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reviewed
inside

Hugh Hudson
on David Lean

Bertolucci:
the eroticism
of cinema

Big Arnie:
Nietzsche's boy

**'When I was a kid I wasn't
watching Godard films, I was
watching *I'm All Right, Jack*'**

Hanif Kureishi on making *London Kills Me*



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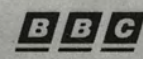
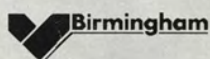
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■ Introduction by Sir Richard Attenborough, tireless champion of the film industry both as actor and award-winning director

Little and large

Contributors

Peter Biskind is executive editor of *Premiere*

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Pervaiz Khan is a film-maker and film programmer of the Birmingham Film and Television Festival

John Powers is film critic of *LA Weekly*

Jonathan Romney is a freelance film critic

Philip Strick, a freelance film critic, has recently written an introduction to the script of Andrei Rublev

Chris Wagstaff is lecturer in Italian at the University of Reading

Benjamin Woolley is writing a book on Virtual Reality

It may well surprise some readers that *The Spider's Stratagem*, widely regarded as one of the seminal films of Bernardo Bertolucci, who is himself viewed as one of the touchstones of European cinema, was commissioned by and first shown on Italian television. But this information tells us only part of the story. What we also need to recognise is what Chris Wagstaff's piece in this issue shows, that Bertolucci forged *The Spider's Stratagem's* aesthetic strategies by working with and against the conventions of television film and drama. Peter Greenaway, whose *Prospero's Books*, reviewed in this issue, is indebted to HDTV, is another cinema director who seems to be revelling in the possibilities that television's alphabet offers him.

But it is not only the potential of television to film-makers that ensures that the relationship between cinema and television will grow ever more intimate. The increasingly incestuous 'I'll scratch your back while you stab mine' character of the relationship is noted in John Powers' column, while in a more serious vein Bethany Haye's Paris column reminds us that television is increasingly funding films for the cinema.

In short, cinema is now, whether at the level of aesthetics, technology or economics, increasingly dependent on television. Perhaps that is neither a case for lamentation nor even surprise in Britain, where the ties between cinema and television have long been strong. But the (in)equality of the relationship here can be measured by noting that while *London Kills Me*, Hanif Kureishi's film, cost £1.5 million (partly funded by Channel 4 to the tune of £500,000), rumour has it that the BBC serialisation of his novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, will cost £3 million. The recent (and dire) television serialisation of Dickens' *Great*

Expectations by HTV cost £4 million and the forthcoming BBC *Clarissa* has a £2 million budget. These television budgets compare with £1.5 million for *Young Soul Rebels* and a mere £850,000 for Derek Jarman's forthcoming feature, *Edward II*.

The priorities of television, then, cannot fail to be a matter of real interest to those committed to cinema, particularly so at the moment when the BBC has instituted its own internal review into what it should be doing in drama and film. It is certainly good news that the BBC is supporting projects such as *Utz*, directed by George Sluizer, and has put money into Philip Ridley's *The Reflecting Skin*, to be seen soon on television. But it is less the BBC's subsidy of theatrically released films that is a matter for concern than the conservatism of its own output.

What is now lacking on television are the strong single plays or films engaged with the contemporary life (and the history) of Britain. The praise (and abuse) bestowed on Channel 4's serial, *GBH*, reminds us only that television single plays often used to stir such passions. And it is here that what is happening in British cinema, in the films of Kureishi, Julien, Jarman and others, seems more encouraging than what is happening in television. For it is these lowish-budget works, knowingly modest in certain ways, that seem to engage energetically and with real spirit – in a non-naturalist way – with British culture and society.

As British television, with its traditional domestic responsibilities, moves towards selling its expensive product overseas to recoup its costs (*Great Expectations* has already been sold to fifty-four countries), it would be strange if cinema in Britain accepted the responsibilities we until recently assumed were those of television.

JERRY ON LINE #1

James Sillavan – Peter Lydon ©



'Jerry, I've read draft fifteen... and I have a few problems. The set-up's a cliché. The protagonist is a wimp. The love interest takes too long. The climax is twenty pages too late... yeah Jerry, yeah... yeah... I think it's ready to shoot'.

Finking it

John Powers

Let me begin, as you secretly want me to, by boasting about the weather. The day is bright, the temperature a placid 27 degrees, and the smog's been carried up-country by the Santa Ana winds that Raymond Chandler made part of the local mythology. In short, it's one of those natty Los Angeles mornings that once prompted that Julian Temple (remember him?) to remark over brunch, "If we had days like this in London, we wouldn't have Mrs Thatcher". Yes, there's something about the sunshine that makes it possible to believe almost anything. For the last five years Twentieth Century Fox has believed that the Coen brothers, writer-director Joel and writer-producer Ethan, were destined to become Hollywood superstars.

When *Blood Simple* came out in 1984, the Coens received the kind of reviews that most young film-makers would kill for, unaware that such overpraise usually winds up killing them. But despite the critical fanfare – Joel was called the next Welles, the next Leone, the next Scorsese – the public found it slow and cold and filled with hateful characters.

Still, the industry was high on the Coens' talent and expected that their next film would prove them mainstream crowdpleasers like *Back to the Future's* Bob Zemeckis and Bob Gale. But for all its raves and saturation advertising, *Raising Arizona* enjoyed only a brief, lacklustre run. And *Miller's Crossing* did even worse. After opening the New York Film Festival to the familiar gaga reviews, it was last seen limping trembling through the grass like that hare in Keats.

This pattern will continue with their new comedy, *Barton Fink*, which snatched the top prizes at Cannes (including the Palm d'Or) and has been hailed by even those critics who, like me, had savaged their earlier work for its adolescent smirkiness. *Barton Fink* has no chance of finding a large audience and for once I think it's a pity, because it's both an amusing send-up of 40s Hollywood and a sly commentary on the role of the artist. The eponymous hero is a self-absorbed, pseudo-radical 40s playwright who's hired by Hollywood to impart "that Barton Fink feeling" to a wrestling picture for Wallace Beery. Stricken by writer's block, he spends all his time looking for help; yet he's so busy blathering self-absorbedly on about the "life of the mind" and "telling the stories of the common man", that he never listens to anybody, least of all the common man.

Fink, in fact, looks like the Coens' parody of the kind of self-important message-mongering artist they absolutely refuse to be. For all their winking at the audience and taste for classic genres, they are essentially formalists, constructing hermetic worlds whose meanings are self-referential and profoundly abstract. (I've been



Not the common man: John Turturro as Barton Fink

told that Ethan's a great reader of Wittgenstein, but that might have been a joke.) The Coens' work exults in self-conscious plot twists and narrative echoes, recurrent imagery and running jokes, camera moves that pull you away from the action to make you admire instead the director's proficiency and cheek. Whatever ideas these brothers do have about love and loyalty, art and life, are invariably approached at the oblique of angles – the surest road to box office failure. *Barton Fink* makes it obvious that the Coens don't care about making popular hits.

And, for the moment anyway, Hollywood doesn't seem to mind; the Coens are still seen as hot young film-makers. Fox executives are proud to have backed a Palm d'Or winner, if only as penance for their unholy success with *Home Alone*. Besides, they feel sure that two young guys as talented and hip as Joel and Ethan Coen will eventually succumb to the inevitable – and produce a box office smash

White feathers

When I was in London last spring, I kept running into media types who – as rappers like to put it – dissed the BBC2 series *Naked Hollywood* for triviality and for being tarted up in the stylistic mascara of *The Late Show*. "They've ruined a great topic", grumbled a rival producer. "It'll be ten years before anybody else can get money to do it right". I must say I was sorry to hear it. As part of my never-ending search for fame, I had appeared in the series; if you saw it, I was the guy who sat by a swimming pool, grinning like a forty-year-old drunkard trying to bluff his way through 'O' levels on Arnold Schwarzenegger. Hearing the show was a damp squib, I flew home grateful that none of my mates in LA would ever see me looking so foolish.

As usual, I'd underestimated the film industry's hysteria. By the time my plane landed at LAX, bootleg copies had already begun circulating among the fanciest mansions in Bel-Air, followed by nervous phone calls. This panicky fright wasn't

surprising, of course. Most Hollywood big shots lead lives free from press criticism; indeed, an eighteen-year-old Spurs striker can expect rougher media treatment than, say, Kevin Costner or super-agent Michael Ovitz.

Insulated from the world by publicists, agents and toadies, such Pooh Bahs treat the press as an extension of their advertising machinery; and the press, which depends on stars to help sell magazines or TV shows, cheerfully plays the lapdog – puffing actors' latest projects, agreeing not to ask 'difficult' questions, even allowing stars to vet articles before they go to press. It may sound unbelievable to a country that wakes up to *The Sun*, but I've heard editors of powerful magazines admit they've dropped juicy facts from a story for fear of offending a publicist. Given this, it's small wonder that Hollywood should think *Armageddon* had come when *Naked Hollywood* suddenly started yipping and snapping at its heels.

Still, *Naked Hollywood* probably wouldn't have caused a ripple outside LA had it not been for the producer team of Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer, legendary jerks who were enraged at how they'd been portrayed. Flexing their muscles, they got Paramount Pictures to refuse to release footage from *Flashdance* and *Top Gun*, making it impossible to air the episode in the US. Though Simpson and Bruckheimer were doubtless pleased with such damage control, it proved to be the worst thing they could have done.

Smelling censorship, if not blood, the Fifth Estate suddenly began rallying round *Naked Hollywood* as if the series lived up to its name. Here was the press' chance to expiate its shame at constantly bending over to service Hollywood. And so, while series producer Nick Kent made the rounds of TV talk shows, the remaining five episodes got gushing reviews from the critics. The *Los Angeles Times* even printed a blow-by-blow account of everything in the "suppressed" episode, though with characteristic servility, the *Times'* supposedly complete summary actually omitted the most damaging parts of the show. Long before *Naked Hollywood* began airing in late July, it had become one of the year's major media events.

Still avid for fame, I took part in a televised discussion of the series. All around me veteran industry reporters expressed their envy at the programme's access to the bigwigs, and even lambasted American television for not producing documentaries nearly so good. In a fit of enthusiasm, one man even said, "Thank God for *Naked Hollywood* and the BBC".

"Are you kidding?" I exclaimed. "Can't you see the show's trivial. Besides it's tarted up in..."

(OK, OK, so I didn't say that. But you have to admit, it would have made a tidy final paragraph.)

Fink, in fact, looks like the Coens' parody of the kind of self-important message-mongering artist they absolutely refuse to be

Feeding the habit

Bethany Hays

With characteristic bravado and a unique talent for celebrating, France is toasting its national cinema's comeback. Responsible for this new sanguinity is a convergence of recent indications that bode well for the future: a slight rise in admissions nationally over 1989; an increase in film production from 136 features in 1989 to 146 in 1990; and a rise in French films' share of box office receipts over American films to a slight majority for the first time in five years. The enthusiasm has begun to spill into the public domain following the spectacular success at home and abroad of Jean-Paul Rappeneau's *Cyrano de Bergerac* and Luc Besson's *Nikita*.

But most encouraging of all is the sparse but steady re-appearance of original, well-constructed films by new young directors. Christian Vincent's first film, *La Discrète*, and François Dupeyron's second, *Un Coeur qui bat*, prove that the old intimist magic is still alive. A modern corollary to *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, *La Discrète* is meticulously rendered cynicism on a human scale. Dupeyron's love story is at the other end of the spectrum: an electric rendering of desire barely contained in the most ordinary and orderly of daily lives.

Secret weapon

Other first and second time directors evince a new brand of comic insight, which, at its best, reflects contemporary attitudes of the French towards themselves. Etienne Chatiliez's sardonically hilarious *Tatie Danielle*, about a vicious elderly relative, repackages typical bodily function belly laughs in the deadpan style of lead actress Tsilla Chelton. *Delicatessen*, by comic book artists Jean-Pierre Jeunot and Marc Caro, is built around a group of

unscrupulous neighbours living above a butcher's shop and is set in a surreal, undefined future that looks exactly like the 40s, meat rationing included. The more grisly the gags, the more the Champs-Élysées audience one recent summer night applauded. Less well received was *Lune froide*, which includes necrophilia – neatly observant, but perhaps too kinky even for France.

This new crop of film-makers has brought back character, timing, tight and highly expressive dialogue, and that rarest of commodities in French cinema, a motor to drive the film forward.

Interestingly, all this comes at a time when the major players in the French industry have begun to focus on the international arena, with big-budget, high-profile co-productions. There are two recognisable tendencies developing at the same time. On the one hand, the high-powered new studios Studio Canal Plus and CB 2000 – subsidiaries of the two richest television networks – are busy moving into the international market through multi-picture deals with Hollywood. And on the other, independents like Charles Gazzot (Téléma), Paul Rassam (AMLF) and René Cleitman (Hachette Première) continue to produce new films by new directors for the home market.

So how has France remained the third largest film-producing country in the world (after the US and India) throughout its ten year slump? How has it been able to revive, when all other European film industries are atrophying? The answer could be in a secret weapon called the CNC (Centre National du Cinéma), which is responsible only to the world's highest-budgeted Ministry of Culture. The two institutions seem to vie with each other to spend money on a wide range of French

The idea of going to the cinema has been kept alive, even if it has been done through bribery, cajolery and unrelenting advertising campaigns that make it seem a patriotic duty

cinema, including French language cinema in Africa and elsewhere.

Between the CNC and the Ministry's own direct aid, the interests of the film business, and its various professions from screenwriting to film exporting, are diligently nurtured and protected. France is the only country to have legislated quotas on non-EC films on television and to further require a minimum proportion of French films within these. Other regulations on television programming and investment in feature films, including the mandatory creation of co-production financing departments within each network, have helped – or forced – television to co-operate with cinema. Resources from advertising revenue are funnelled back into film production and the constant presence of French film on the small screen keeps the industry in the public's field of vision, whether they go to the cinema or not. Television's investment in cinema has tripled since 1985 and a film that doesn't have some television money is virtually nonexistent in France.

Smattering of success

The Ministry of Culture also invents and funds all kinds of programmes and events: festivals of French film abroad and as many as 360 festivals a year in France; cheap ticket days and other subsidised reductions; and media events celebrating everything and anything to do with what it persists in calling the Seventh Art. It has also allocated enormous resources to a new state-of-the-art film school, the FEMIS.

But has all this helped, or is it a case of artificial resuscitation? Obviously, it is as impossible to legislate talent as it is social harmony. But by persisting, by refusing to be deterred by spectacular failures born of their own mistakes – such as the policy of supporting *grands spectacles* like *La Révolution française* (1989), a \$50 million bomb – the Ministry and the CNC have maintained a climate in which young talent can develop. And they have succeeded in keeping alive the idea, if not always the practice, of going to the cinema, even if this has been done through bribery, cajolery and unrelenting advertising campaigns that make it seem a patriotic duty.

This smattering of successes seems to hold the key to the possibility of bringing audiences back for good and giving them a way to relearn how to identify with French cultural references long usurped by the pervasive presence of American movies, television and pop music. Most of the young directors mentioned are now working on new films, irrespective of the box office success of their first films, thanks to CNC and Ministry of Culture subsidies and the confidence inspired by their early efforts. This may not exactly constitute a golden age, but France is undoubtedly the most fertile place in Europe to make a movie.



The French at play: Tsilla Chelton as *Tatie Danielle*

Between the sheets

Peter Biskind

Hot town, summer in the cities... The stakes were high. This summer, fifty movies, representing an investment of \$2 billion (including prints and advertising costs), chased a market of about the same size: \$2 billion, or 40 per cent of annual US grosses. Last year, only thirty-five movies competed for those summer dollars, and still grosses were down.

The lesson the industry drew from last summer's disappointing box office was that the era of mega-budget 'event' movies chocked full of stars and special effects was over. Not only did blockbusters and/or sequels like *Another 48 Hrs*, *Days of Thunder* and *The Two Jakes* bomb, but even when they did moderately well, there were so many of them that they cancelled one another out. Moreover, surprise hits like *Pretty Woman* and *Ghost* proved that there was a women's audience out there prepared to go to films in droves, while *Home Alone* showed you didn't need high-priced stars to hit the jackpot. Goodbye Simpson and Bruckheimer, Gordon and Silver, and even Tom Cruise; hello Joels (Rubin and Schumacher), and especially Julia Roberts, the first bona fide bankable female star in nearly a generation. But the only thing everybody knows for sure in Hollywood is that nobody knows anything.

As a result of last summer, this summer's line-up looked significantly different. There were fewer sequels, little in the way of teen comedies, more pictures aimed at women, and then more one-of-a-kind - generally, that is, something for (almost) everyone. But the great irony was, of course, that by far the biggest hit was just the kind of picture last summer 'proved' was passé - the profligate special effects sequel with a big international star: *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. And second in line was *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, carried by Kevin Costner.

Proved wrong

Terminator 2 was the one genuine phenomenon of the summer. Opening on the July 4th weekend, it took \$115 million in three weeks. T2 scored opening day grosses of \$12 million, just \$3 million shy of *Batman*, whose box office performance has become the benchmark of success. And T2 also made its money quickly. It broke the \$100 million mark in seventeen days, only six days behind *Batman*.

Not that studio execs were exactly unhappy to have been proved wrong. After a weak spring and early summer, they were worried. In April, ticket sales fell 19 per cent below last year. In May, grosses fell 11 per cent, down to \$327 million. Last summer, several movies made \$20 million-plus debuts, but for a while this summer it looked as if the biggest opening weekend would be *Backdraft*, with a nice, but unspectacular \$15.6 million. Although *Sleep-*



Bashing the yuppie: Harrison Ford in 'Regarding Henry'

ing With the Enemy was a hit, a second Julia Roberts vehicle that was not noticeably inferior, was not. *Dying Young* died young.

Then there were the disasters. *Hudson Hawk*, for which Tri-Star paid Bruce Willis \$10 million to play a singing cat burglar, cost an estimated \$70 million to make and market. It pulled in an embarrassingly slight \$5.8 million on Memorial Day weekend. Fox's *Only the Lonely*, a romantic comedy directed and produced by *Home Alone*'s Chris Columbus and John Hughes opened the season with a resounding thud, as did Disney's *Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken*. And there were other reasons to worry. From the studio point of view, the summer's features represented a glut. At least five movies were scheduled to open each weekend in August.

But the conventional wisdom is that one or two hits can make a summer, generating enough heat to carry the rest along with them, and this proved to be true. The other hits included *City Slickers* from Columbia, *What About Bob?* from Disney, *New Jack City* from Warners, *Jungle Fever* from Universal, *Boyz n the Hood* from Columbia, and the reissue of *101 Dalmatians* from Disney, which broke the weekend and single day box office records for a fully animated film, previously held by the reissue of *Snow White*. By the weekend of 19 July prospects were looking good. The top ten pictures were running at 19.5 per cent above last year, although down 15 per cent from 1989.

What does it all mean? First, the wild success of T2 meant that the days of high-flying cowboy film-making are by no means over. Arnold will undoubtedly return. Moreover, Carolco, the troubled company that made T2, will survive to see another day. But if T2 proved that last summer's Eeyores were not entirely right, neither were they entirely wrong. There is ample proof that the recession has hurt Hollywood. With the economy still struggling, consumers are more cautious with their discretionary income. There is a

good deal of resentment in the industry at the extent to which it has become dependent on event movies. Observers complain that they attract the kind of people who only go to the movies a few times a year, but they don't expand the total universe of viewers. (The optimists argued that the box office for *City Slickers*, *Jungle Fever*, and *Thelma and Louise* held steady, and was not affected by T2 or *Robin Hood*.) As one studio head said, "We need fewer great movies, and more good movies".

All this boils down to trouble. T2 and *Robin Hood* may have put off the day of reckoning, but many worry that Hollywood will slide into a recession as severe as the one that ravaged the industry twenty years ago. If marketing is included, the cost of the average picture is nearly \$50 million. Executives complain they're spending three times what it cost to open a picture three years ago, while the market has not grown commensurately.

Soft men

By mid-summer, the studio market shares looked like this. In first place, with a share of 16.3 per cent was Fox, on the strength of *Home Alone* and *Sleeping With the Enemy*. It released ten pictures. Orion was second with 15 per cent, on the basis of *Dances With Wolves* and *The Silence of the Lambs*, with only six releases. Warners was third with 13.9 per cent, but that is based on seventeen releases. Universal was fourth (13.1 per cent) with twelve releases, and Disney fifth (13 per cent) with thirteen releases. This summer is not likely to have broken the summer of 1989's \$2 billion record.

The good news is that films by African-Americans accounted for a big slice of the box office, and that their aggregate cost was probably well under *Robin Hood*'s arrow budget. So we'll be seeing more of them. Apart from *New Jack City*, these are low-concept, character-driven movies.

Story-wise, movie pundits remarked on this summer's hard women and soft men. Leading off with *Thelma and Louise*, moving on to Julia Roberts, who dispatched her own husband in *Sleeping With the Enemy*, and then Linda Hamilton's homicidal Sarah Connor from T2, and Kathleen Turner's two-fisted V. I. Warshawski, women kicked ass. And yes, the new killer women were matched by feminised men, with Arnold's Terminator leading the way.

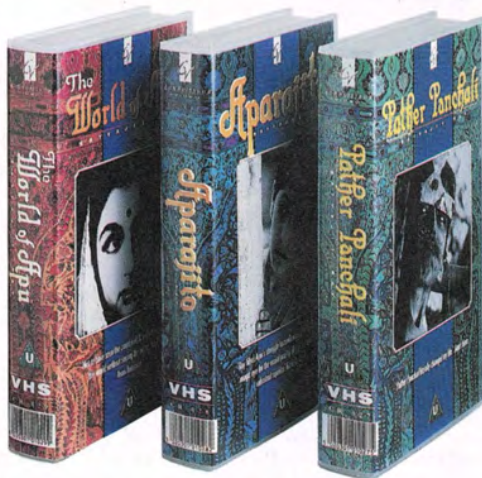
And then there was the cycle of yuppie-bashing movies like *Regarding Henry* (Harrison Ford with puppy), *City Slickers* (Billy Crystal with calf), *The Doctor* (Bill Hurt with tumour), and *Dying Young* (Campbell Scott with white blood cells). For unredeemable yuppies like Patrick Bergin in *Sleeping With the Enemy*, nothing would do but a bullet in the chest. Men are so far gone in these films that their redemption can only be imagined in apocalyptic terms. A shot in the head or cancer somehow become apt metaphors for therapy. Perhaps it's true.

There were fewer sequels, little in the way of teen comedies, more pictures aimed at women, and more one-of-a-kind - something for (almost) everyone

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Home sweet home:
Headley (Fiona Shaw)
in her home with one
of her trophies, Clint
(Justin Chadwick).
Top right: Clint on his
way to finding a squat

Hanif Kureishi talks
to Philip Dodd about
style, comedy and
politics in his new film,
'London Kills Me' –
and about bravery in
the editing room

Requiem for a

rave



According to its writer and first-time director, Hanif Kureishi, *London Kills Me* was made for the crowd that goes down to the Odeon on Saturday nights. Set around Ladbroke Grove in London's Notting Hill, the film focuses on a group of streetwise young drug dealers and is remarkable for its indifference to the dictum that drug films have to be grittily dour laments about lost souls and homelessness. I can think of no other film that takes such a subject and makes of it a tender comedy.

Like Isaac Julien's recent *Young Soul Rebels*, *London Kills Me* is much absorbed with style and music. It is a film not only about London street kids and their lives, but made for them, working within their own idioms. Imagine Colin MacInnes' novel *Absolute Beginners* crossed with De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* and Susan Seidelman's *Desperately Seeking Susan* – also a comedy about changing clothes and changing places – and you begin to have the feel of it.

At the centre of *London Kills Me* is Clint Eastwood (named as much after the reggae star as the Hollywood actor), a homeless boy who sells drugs on the streets. One evening he goes to a rave with his charismatic drug pusher employer, Muffdiver, and Sylvie, with whom he is half in love. There, Muffdiver divests Clint of Sylvie, while some heavies rid him of his clothing, beat him up and take the money they find in his shoe as payment for an outstanding debt.

The naked Clint wails that this is his birthday, that he is weary of this life and intends to find a job and go straight. Through the recommendation of a bohemian woman to whom he supplies dope, he is offered a job as a waiter in a wine bar on condition that he first finds a decent pair of shoes. It is the search for the shoes that shapes the narrative.

Through Clint's search for the shoes and respectability, *London Kills Me* takes us into the various worlds of Notting Hill. These include the Sufi centre, above which Muffdiver and his posse have their squat; the world of the local big-time drug dealer Mr G, whose patronage Muffdiver needs to expand his business, but which he fails to secure after Clint steals his money; and the world of the tourists, two of whom are swindled by Clint when he rents them a room already occupied by one of the posse. It's one of the tourists who, trying to be hip, says "London kills me". Clint understands the phrase to have a more literal meaning.

After a brief retreat to the countryside, when the posse visit Clint's mother, the film comes to a climax when Mr G decides to evict and punish the squatters. Muffdiver and Sylvie dress as goths to escape London and urge Clint to do the same, disguised as a skinhead. He refuses. The two others leave by train, but Sylvie abandons Muffdiver at a station. Meanwhile Clint has finally stolen a usable pair of boots – unwittingly, from Hemingway, his future employer – and presents himself ready for work. He is given the job and becomes a success. The shoe is true.

London Kills Me is a Working Title film, produced by Judy Hunt for £1.5 million and shot by Ed Lachman, the cinematographer for Jean-Luc Godard and Wim Wenders as well as for Susan Seidelman on *Desperately Seeking Susan*. It opens in London in early November.

The following is extracted from an interview that took place in London in August. We began by talking about how social problem films, from British documentaries of the 30s onwards, tend to make their subjects the objects of our sympathy – and how films can ►

◀ be made that adopt the kids' point of view rather than the observers'.

Hanif Kureishi: There was a genre of films in the 80s – including Martin Scorsese's *After Hours* and Jonathan Demme's *Something Wild* – which showed what happens if you are a yuppie and you fall through the crust of money into the underworld, the world of the working class. They were versions, in a way, of the experience of the Americans in Vietnam: the good white man fallen among animals, except that this was in New York or Chicago or wherever. It seemed to me that you could get away from that way of looking at things if you stopped putting a frame around the action – the one thing you couldn't do was to start off with a journalist. Once the journalist goes in, you have the frame, which always seems to me to imply a sort of failure from the start.

I never saw this world of the kids of *London Kills Me* in that way. It's outside the world in which I live, but not outside my mental world. I recognised that the only way the film would work would be if you were involved in what was happening between these people – distancing in any way seemed beside the point.

Philip Dodd: As I watched, I kept thinking of Muffdiver's posse as Fagin's thieves in Bart's *'Oliver'*. Were they in your mind?

Yes. Also I had seen a drawing that Malcolm McLaren made in 1973 of such street kids. Underneath it says, "Dickens' London". And the drawing could well be of *The Sex Pistols*: it's as if he found the boys and designed them according to his sketches.

When I was researching the film I would see these kids running around the streets of Notting Hill – dealing, being beaten up, getting into big fights, going to raves where they would make £1,000 from selling Ecstasy at £25 a shot. Sometimes some of the kids were being picked up by the police and put into police cells for two or three nights without anyone claiming them or the police sending them to the courts. And then you would pass someone from that other Notting Hill world – the affluent world of the media – or see Harold Pinter in a restaurant. Dickensian is not the right word, but it does conjure up the mixture of the rich and the poor, the idea of these worlds co-existing. I remember you once said that there were enough stories in west London to keep you in work forever.

It always surprises me that people have to sack Waugh or Forster for stories – I bet it will be Huxley's turn next year – when all you have to do is look around London and see the extraordinary mix of people. Having an American, Ed Lachman, shoot the film was instructive. He saw how eccentric Notting Hill is, how eccentric people look. I can't think of many other places in London with its mix. I have also always liked *Performance*, particularly the shots of Powis Square, as well as Colin MacInnes' novels. They are specifically about young people, about fashion and music – things I felt hadn't been much represented, certainly not in the novel and not that often in films.

Clothes and style are certainly at the core of the movie. It's not merely that like some male Cinderella, Clint



Mantle of manhood: Clint's stepfather, Stone (Alun Armstrong) with his '59 Cadillac

'I am interested in the way people completely make and remake themselves in the city'

needs to find the right shoes so he can go to the ball, but that throughout the movie Clint and others dress and discard clothes at will. There's a wonderful scene in which Clint's Teddy boy stepfather dresses as Elvis Presley as he chases the posse from his homestead.

It's partly to do with the fact that we grew up, you and I, at a time when what people wore, whatever they wore, mattered a great deal. And I am very interested in the way people completely make and remake themselves all the time in the city. Muffdiver in the film imagines himself as a sort of gangster, a minor American drug criminal. His efforts are rather farcical because of the fantasies he has of that sort of life. The main character in my novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* is rather like that, too: he becomes an actor, a profession of mutation; he plays Mowgli and then in another play he takes



The artful dodger: Muffdiver (Steven Mackintosh) fleeing the city of destruction

the part of an immigrant, though this is a form of racism, of stereotyping. It is difficult for a person of colour to evade the definitions settled upon him.

One of the striking things about the movie is that it betrays no nostalgia for the lost roots of these kids, no sense that their identities are simply settled, and that without their families they are lost souls. In fact, the film seems to play with the idea of the posse as an alternative family, much as 'Young Soul Rebels' and 'In Bed with Madonna' have 'pretend' families.

The left has always fetishised roots. And the old left has a contempt for pop culture, for pop music and the meanings it has embodied for people like us – it was always seen just as capitalism in another guise.

These young people in the film are entirely involved in these things, and they are much

more involved in the present and future than in the past. Roots don't seem to be an absence in their lives. In a way a sort of family is formed in the film of the posse, a parody of Thatcher's idea of the family unit. Its members all have their own place – somebody makes the tea, there is a hierarchy – but they are not related by blood. That seems just arbitrary now.

The sequence which does try to deal with relationships in a biological family begins with Clint and the posse visiting Clint's mother and stepfather in the countryside. Yet this seemed the most fairytale part of the film, with the posse wandering the fields like a band which has lost its Peter Pan.

There are similar moments in my other films. The scenes in the laundrette in *My Beautiful Laundrette* are rather like that, and in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* there is the fuck sandwich,

with the five Rastafarians singing *My Girl* and the three couples copulating on the split screen. These are the fun bits to write.

For *London Kills Me*, we did shoot some scenes where one of the posse did some speeches from *A Midsummer's Night Dream* and everyone was running around in the woods, but in the end we took it all out. It was a bit too bizarre, and in any case, I wanted the film to be like *A Hard Day's Night* or *Catch Us if You Can* – that film John Boorman made about The Dave Clarke Five. I wanted it to be in some ways a take-off of those pop group films of the 60s or of The Monkees. Kids running around in that way rather than a sad film about being homeless.

But the movie is a historical film about several generations, told through style – about how each of them survives. There's Clint's macho Teddy boy stepfather with his Elvis obsession, who seems to have lived out that adage from 'Absolute Beginners' that Teds have left London to live in the provinces; there's the bohemian 60s group with their cowboy boots, wine bars and music; and there's the young with their raves.

It's a way of looking at history that young people would immediately understand. They have a fantastic knowledge of the history of pop music and see the world through that: they see Harold Wilson as an adjunct to the Beatles.

So it's a deliberate attempt to write history in terms which the people in the film as well as those you want to watch it will recognise?

Yes, but it's also to do with having measured my own life out in pop music, in the way that the previous generation measure their lives out in terms of movies. Pop music affected me much more than films or literature and it was always part of my cultural vocabulary – far more than anything more esoteric. I spent years pretending that one spent one's youth reading Dostoevsky, when in fact what I had really been doing was listening to King Crimson. Since *The Buddha of Suburbia*, I have started to write about these things much more than before, when I was ashamed and wanted to seem as if I had more cultural ballast. Whereas in fact at the bottom of one's soul is Barclay James Harvest.

You seem reluctant to talk about the film's visual dynamic, yet at the centre is a visual idea: taking off and putting on a shoe. Where did the idea come from? Two things. First there was a kid I knew, that I still know, who was an Ecstasy dealer. He was living in a squat and had borrowed this girl's shoes. We were sitting on the roof drinking a bottle of champagne he had stolen and this girl came up barefoot and said, "Where's my fucking shoes?" She took them off him and then he was really stuck. The image stayed in my mind.

I also like stories such as Maupassant's, or whoever, about necklaces or earrings or a particular jewel. The story of an object through a film. And I wanted to do something much simpler than *My Beautiful Laundrette* or *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, in which politics and characters are combined. In *London Kills Me*, the characters aren't articulate in that way; they wouldn't speak for themselves or make any sort of statement on their own behalf.

But that's not to say these kids are passive victims. ►

◀ When I was researching the film or hanging around meeting all these kids in the late 80s, they were really energetic. Most of them didn't have established places to live or jobs – they had left their families and they were dealing – but they were real little go-ahead kids. They had sound systems for parties; some of them were doing magazines and selling little books; they were selling records and clothes and running raves. And, of course, the drug dealers were incredibly enterprising. They would go around with portable phones and beepers; they would be hiring taxis to go to raves.

The whole thing seemed like a sort of parody of what Thatcher wanted. Here were all these kids who were quite badly educated, weren't housed and the State, the great Welfare State, had done very little for them; it couldn't even find them a room to live in. Yet they were living out the Thatcherite dream – they were on the street dealing really hard. So it was like a parody of what the yuppies were doing at the same time in the city.

In that sense, I suppose the film is about the waste: it is not a film that moralises about waste, but these are people who have a lot of intelligence and energy and there is no place for them. One of the things that happens in the film is that Clint steals Muffdiver's money. I wanted to show that these relationships are poisoned by necessity and scarcity rather than pretending that feeling is foremost. You can pretend that is the case in bourgeois films, because there is a base there from which you can be in love. But if one of you is a junkie and other people are dealers then money is more important than the intimacy of sex.

*I've gone back to the ending several times. Clint is presented with two possible solutions. He can disguise himself among the funereal black of the goths and escape London, like so many adolescent heroes before him. But instead he is incorporated; he dresses in a white shirt and smiles and smiles at the customers. Let's remember that he gives up his relationships with Muffdiver, this wonderful boy, and with Sylvie, and his whole world of selling drugs, all to become a waiter. That is deeply worrying – an open question, rather like the end of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. By deciding to do the right things – become a waiter – he has lost himself.*

What happens to Clint is connected in some way with how Thatcher tried to straighten out England, to flatten it; Clint becoming a waiter is in a way like that. But the charm of England has always seemed to me that it is a sort of higgledy-piggledy, broken, crooked place. Since the war the one thing that Britain has been good at is producing pop music. This thing that Thatcher hates has actually made a great deal of money for this country – and in fact in the 60s and 70s the thing that prevented the country culturally from being taken over by America was the fact that we held our own in terms of pop music. The Who, The Kinks and, later on, The Sex Pistols, The Clash – the music seemed to me to be the centre of our identity and individuality. It was actually what was interesting about the place.

'Higgledy-piggledy' seems a fair phrase to reflect your own career as playwright, novelist, scriptwriter and director, and to describe 'London Kills Me', which is in love with flux, change and instability. Clint, a white boy, is named after a reggae singer who himself appropriates the name of a Hollywood actor. Identities are tried on, experimented with...

The film isn't concerned with ethnicity as a subject matter, and it's mostly about white kids. It seems to me progress to assume that we live in a mixed society. Before it was your job to say: "Oh, by the way, there are amazing people here who do live here and are part of Britain". Now we can integrate that into our work while not forgetting it.

There are some very funny sequences in the film, not least the one where the head of the Sufi centre, the sandal-clad Dr Bubba, meets the local drug dealers. And structurally, the film seems to work as a comedy – the outcast is taken in. How deliberate is the choice of a comic idiom?

Comedy is not a suit you can put on, it's more a way of seeing the world. When I was a kid I wasn't sitting in the cinema watching Godard films, I was watching *Carry on Camping*, *I'm All Right, Jack*. Every night I would come home from school, do my homework, have my tea and then watch these things – *Steptoe and Son*, *On the Buses*. They are hilarious and they are very well observed, well written, well crafted.



Sylvie (Emer McCourt), who belongs to no one

'I wanted to show these relationships are poisoned by scarcity rather than pretending feeling is foremost'

The worst thing you could be, it seemed to me, in the 80s as opposed to the 70s, was worthy. Worthy people had had it by the 80s – you couldn't be worthy even if you wanted to say serious things about racism. Ken Loach couldn't make the same films then that he had made before.

The danger with me and my work is that I will become, or already am, glib and flippant – that I will not be able to take the world seriously at all. What I have always wanted is a combination of feeling and seriousness about the world: somehow the humour has always guarded the dignity of life. Actually the films I really love the best have a European sense of humour rather than an American one. *The Fireman's Ball* is the funniest film ever made in the history of the world. And there's also *Closely Observed Trains*. Somehow these films expose what it is to be human and make us laugh at it without losing our dignity; they show us as being sad and pathetic people, as we are, but without just mocking us. The brilliance of those early Milos Forman films is that they are so well judged in guarding the humanity and foolishness at the same time. Of course you find that in Chekhov, Gogol, Dostoevsky and in Dickens, too.

American humour is founded on gags rather than coming out of what people do and the contradiction between what they want, and then what they do, and then how they inevitably fall on their face.

Tell me about how you approached the film, your first directing job.

I had learnt a lot through being with Stephen Frears, mostly about an attitude to working that was very relaxed, very reliant on other people – making sure you hired the right people and then allowing them to do their job. And then going to them and saying: "What do you think the colour of that wall should be?" And if they said it should be blue, then it would be blue because there was the confidence that this person should know.

It was also crucial to have a very good cameraman, Ed Lachman, who seemed sometimes to be the only person who had any idea at all of what was going on in the film, especially in the larger scenes where we had two cameras. Yet he wouldn't hustle you into making choices that you wouldn't have made yourself.

I have always heard that films are made on the cutting room floor...

That's where you have to be really brave. I had a fantastic editor – Jon Gregory, who cuts Mike Leigh's films. The rough cut was three hours long and I loved every minute of it. I wanted to put it out just like that – like one of Andy Warhol's films where you just sit there for hours and there is no narrative. Jon took out all the best scenes, the most written scenes, the scenes we shot the most carefully. The sort of stuff we shot late at night, just on the edges when we had time – all those bits stayed in. It was a real education in bravery to have someone who said, "Look, this isn't working". I wouldn't have done it myself.

I did shoot some scenes with two women

talking about what drugs meant for their generation and what drugs mean for this generation, for the middle classes, smoking dope, or for a kid on the street using Ecstasy or Crack. But of course these are the scenes you always take out because there is too much talking in them. They are always the ones that interest you more when you are writing them – when you're writing a scene with two blokes climbing up a drainpipe through a window there isn't anything to write, but when you are writing a discussion about the place of drugs in the modern world, you think: "Oh, I really like doing this". But of course it is tedious on the screen, it is moralising, it is verbose – and you end up taking it out.

How did you find working with your backers? I heard that Channel 4 was something of a problem.

They were rather nervous at one time about the fact that the characters talk explicitly about drugs. I had to explain that as their job is drug dealing, then they would, in the way that if you were making a film about accountants they would now and again discuss money, perhaps. Also, as the film was trying to reach a wider audience, I had to find some way of giving the audience some sense of what the drugs were and what they were called and how it all works. I regret not having some scenes showing what a good time you can have on drugs. I felt the film was rather unnecessarily anti-drugs; there should have been much more of a "Say yes to drugs" to make you see why that world is so seductive.

Did anyone try to shape your casting policy, since this is, after all, a film that resolutely sets itself against star casting?

Nobody warned me off casting anybody; I had as much freedom as I wanted, as you do in British films when you don't have any money. Apart from the American wine-bar owner. Every night the American company, New Line, and their video distributor insisted that I send them a list of all the people I wanted to play that part. There were several of them, one of whom actually agreed – a very good actor who they hadn't heard of and they refused to allow me to cast who I wanted.

They said they wanted Bob Dylan; I said, "I don't think Bob is going to come out for this one, to be honest with you". They said, "Then what about Neil Young?" They thought the only way anyone was going to see this film would be if you got a real star playing this fucking part. It was a nightmare. In the end we got Brad Dourif, who turned out to be excellent – a good actor and a nice guy. And of course they had heard of him, because he was in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

It was the first time I had experienced that sense of America intruding on your freedom as a writer or director. It really put the wind up me going to work in Los Angeles.

Do you want to make another movie?

I would like to work with Stephen Frears again if he would have it. I don't know whether he would be interested in making a film in England any more. This small country. But maybe he will.

Charlie Gillett on finding the music for 'London Kills Me'

Sounds new

● Hanif gave me a general brief: "I want some records which will give the film an authentic atmosphere; which sound good; and which you like. I don't care where they come from, they could be from Ladbroke Grove, Senegal, Scotland, Louisiana. You tell me".

When I visit a city for the first time, I love the collage of music that comes at me from all sides, from shop doorways, market stalls, car radios and open windows. I wanted to present a patchwork quilt of London's sounds which an audience would 'believe' without knowing the individual items.

I'm often uncomfortable with scored music; when a composer seeks to enhance the mood of a scene with a deliberate musical gesture, pushing the audience to a particular response, I'm inclined to resent and resist the interference. I prefer the juxtaposition of pictures against a piece of music that already exists, where the changes in the music are done for compositional reasons and there's no self-consciousness in how it connects to the visual action. The skill comes from the editor, adjusting the pictures to the music enough to make sense of the relationship, but without forcing unnatural connections.

For *London Kills Me*, I wanted to include records that the audience would not specifically recognise, but would associate with the experience of seeing the film: this is new, now.

In the script there were two obvious contexts for source music: the many scenes in the streets of Notting Hill, and one particular scene at a party near the beginning of the film. I sorted out a shortlist of about forty current records I felt were roughly right for the film in general, ranging from House through Rap and reggae to Indie Rock, and a few so-called 'World Music' records. Hanif's script included few specific directions for music, but he did have one scene where he hoped for what he called "much third worldism"; in the end, that particular scene was cut out of the film; bye bye Youssou, so long Mari Boine.

As I skirted around records which featured the most blatant dance hit formulas of the time, a common thread began to emerge among the surviving

contenders, with influences of jazz and/or reggae giving a warmer, more musical touch to even the toughest dance tracks.

For the party I was determined to avoid a problem that afflicts many films, where a scene is shot of people dancing to a convenient hit, which is later substituted by something different on the film soundtrack; it's impossible for the editor to synchronise the dancers' movements to the music. I wanted live DJs at the party to play an agreed repertoire of contractually available records, so we could use the same music on the soundtrack. Ben Peel and Marc Pettifore run warehouse raves in south London which cover the gamut of modern dance music. We sifted through our combined collections, honing in on records which met all the criteria, by artists including Bass-O-Matic, Daddy Freddy, Definition of Sound, Djum Djum, Flourgon and Ninjaman, Izit, JC001 and D'Zire, LeftField, Man Machine, Massive Attack, Michael Prophet and Ricky Tuffy, the Raga Twins, Renegade Soundwave, St Etienne with Q-T. As it turned out, for reasons of continuity, only four records were played throughout the day at the party, but the selection process was invaluable in confirming the mood of music that suited the film.

I wanted to include some kind of 'rock', following the trail left by Big Audio Dynamite, the Notting Hill based group formed by Mick Jones of the Clash with ex-film-maker Don Letts, who brought a reggae touch to a powerful rock approach. Hanif felt their music would unbalance the film with too many specific associations, and we found our answer in the album *In Dub* by Renegade Soundwave, a trio based in Notting Hill who fuse rock guitar and reggae bass over slow but consistent dance grooves. The film opens to the sound of Renegade Soundwave's mix of 'Biting My Nails', whose episodic structure seems tailor-made for a film score.

At the end of each day's shoot, the film would be rushed to the labs for developing, and the next day editor Jon Gregory would assemble the material into its scripted sequence, so that within a day of the end of shooting, he had the whole film

loosely edited. A video copy was made, and Hanif and I would begin to assign various records to particular spots. The decisions were mostly quite easy: some scenes were immediately enhanced; others felt uncomfortable. When in doubt we left it out, deciding that either the scene didn't need music at all, or that sparse scored music might be better.

We transferred the likely contenders to magnetic tape and Jon Gregory began to edit the film to the particular items we had chosen. The process of elimination then took several months, as each piece we included affected the scenes around it. Sometimes Jon found a better context for a piece of music than the place Hanif and I had chosen, notably 'Mustt Mustt' by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. Changes were being made right up to the finish, and five pieces which had been apparent certainties for several weeks were dropped on the last possible day. Hanif, Jon and I had remarkably few disagreements about what worked or didn't work. We all had regrets about songs we hoped to include but couldn't find an appropriate place for. But the film had to win, over our individual emotional preferences.

Music End Credits

1. *Biting My Nails* by Renegade Soundwave
2. *Zig It Up* by Ninjaman and Flourgon
3. *Soul Surrender* by Bass-O-Matic
4. *More Than I Know* by LeftField
5. *Guayacil City* by Mano Negra
6. *Pocket Porn Dub* by Renegade Soundwave
7. *Baina Nakhill* by Hassan Erraji
8. *Your Love* by Michael Prophet and Ricky Tuffy
9. *Mustt Mustt* by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan
10. *Beautiful People* by Stress
11. *Step Into Time* by Man Machine
12. *Are You Lonesome Tonight?*
13. *Make Way for the Originals* by Izit
14. *Fast Fish and Loose Fish (The Bone Mix)* by QRZ
15. *Rising Above Bedlam* by Jah Wobble's Invaders of the Heart
16. *The Pleasure and the Pain* by Debby Browne

● From *London Kills Me* by Hanif Kureishi, to be published by Faber and Faber, 4 November 1991 © Charlie Gillett, 1991



Hauntings: Athos Magnani, the son who cannot face the past, left; Draifa, below, the father's mistress who summons the present to lay the ghosts



With 'The Spider's Stratagem', Bertolucci found a way of reconciling pleasure and politics, argues Chris Wagstaff

Theatre of memory

In the reign of Augustus, Horace admonished poets to seek a judicious balance between edifying and pleasing their readers. In 1970, Bernardo Bertolucci (born into a family of poets) came to the end of a painful search for that balance, and shot two films in the same year, *Strategia del ragno* (*The Spider's Stratagem*) and *Il conformista* (*The Conformist*). Both films tell of the assassination of a prominent anti-fascist in the 30s; in both films the surface level of that story covers a 'latent' Oedipal rivalry, in which a son figure comes to doubt the political integrity of the anti-fascist father figure; in both films the relationship of the son figure and the wife/mistress of the father figure is pivotal. And then both films are uncannily pleasurable to watch.

But the achievements of this fruitful year did not come easily to Bertolucci. After a precocious start as Pasolini's assistant on *Accattone* (1961), and a literary prize for his volume of verse, *In cerca del mistero* (*In Search of the Mystery*, 1962), his first film as director had been *La commare secca* (*The Grim Reaper*) in 1962, followed by his much admired *Prima della rivoluzione* (*Before the Revolution*) in 1964. Then had come a period of self-questioning, in which he had made documentaries and shorts, and written the subject for Sergio Leone's *C'era una volta il West* (*Once upon a Time in the West*), before making *Partner* in 1968. No one seemed to like *Partner* – even friends would avoid discussing it with him – and Bertolucci describes himself as having been confused in this period.

Nowadays, Bertolucci is fluent on the nature and cause of his confusion. But we need to hear him closer to the time, in answers to questions put to him by Amos Vogel at the 1970 New York Film Festival, where his two latest films were showing. Vogel says that *Before the Revolution* is a cult film for the few, while *The Conformist* is acceptable to a wider audience, to which Bertolucci responds: "I like that very much". Vogel: "That it has become a cult film?" Bertolucci: "No, that with *The Conformist* I can now speak to a wider audience... In this sense, Victor Fleming was a very fortunate person... he made *Gone with the Wind*... [laughs] Fleming communicates with everybody".

The town in which the action of *The Spider's Stratagem* is set is called Tara, named after the river Taro that flows near Sabbioneta, the ►

Based on Borges' story, 'Theme of the Traitor and the Hero', 'The Spider's Stratagem' shows Athos Magnani arriving in the present at the town of Tara, summoned by Draifa, his father's mistress, to find out who had murdered her lover, a revered anti-fascist, in 1936. The son meets his father's old friends, who explain in a rehearsed way how the father and they had planned to assassinate Mussolini during a performance of 'Rigoletto'. But someone had betrayed the plan to the police, Mussolini had not turned up, and the father instead had been slain by a fascist assassin. The son feels he is being lied to, and tries to leave the town, but on the anniversary of his father's death, a performance of 'Rigoletto' draws him in and he discovers that his father, in a moment of weakness, had betrayed the plot, that his friends had uncovered his treachery and the father had arranged for them to shoot him. The next morning, the son has to give a speech to commemorate the heroic death of his father, and decides that he cannot reveal the truth; he, too, is caught in the web spun thirty-five years before by his father. When he goes to take a train home it never comes, and grass is seen growing over the tracks...

● **Made in Italy, 1970. Directed by Bernardo Bertolucci. Screenplay: Mariù Parolini, Eduardo De Gregorio, Bernardo Bertolucci. Director of photography: Vittorio Storaro. Editor: Roberto Perpignani. Production: RAI-Red Film, Giovanni Bertolucci. With Giulio Brogi (Athos Magnani), Alida Valli (Draifa), Tino Scotti (Costa), Pippo Campanini (Gaibazzi), Franco Giovannelli (Rasori)**

● **Suggested reading: Donald Ranvaud and Enzo Ungari, 'Bertolucci by Bertolucci' [interviews] (1987); T. Jefferson Kline, 'Bertolucci's Dream Loom' (1987); Robert Phillip Kolker, 'Bernardo Bertolucci' (1985); Andrew Britton, 'Thinking about Father', in 'Movie', 23 (1976-7)**

◀ town in which the film was shot. But of course, Tara is most of all the name of the plantation to which a character in *Gone with the Wind* yearns to return – “Tara is the cinema, Tara is *Gone with the Wind*”, says Bertolucci. He was delighted when an American academic pointed out that these were also the initial syllables of the name of a well-known spider. Pressed further by Vogel, Bertolucci says he fears the bourgeois aestheticism of the avant-garde, “because I know very well that I can make a film about the quality of the wind... the essence of wind which is nothing... and it will make festival audiences happy”.

Until *The Spider's Stratagem*, Jean-Luc Godard had been Bertolucci's mentor. In later years, he would talk about how the influence of Godard led young film-makers to believe that audiences ought to kneel in sackcloth and ashes before their films; how this sadistic attitude towards the viewer began to make him feel uncomfortable; and how he grew to desire “a dialogue with the public, communication”. Indeed in *The Conformist*, the Professor Quadri who is assassinated lives at Godard's Paris address and telephone number – Bertolucci ‘kills’ one of his many artistic father figures (the others are, in this period, his actual father, the poet Attilio Bertolucci, and the poet, political writer and film-maker Pier Paolo Pasolini). The influence of Godard had entailed a strong tilt towards the Horatian *utile*, with scant concern for the public's *dilectum*. It was didactic cinema: “I understood that the cinema I had been involved in up to then was gratifying and protective, a cinema of defence, ungenerous”.

There was no obvious solution. *Partner* had deployed theatrical procedures learned from Artaud and Brecht to insist that the film is a representation, and to deter the viewer from any illusions about its continuity with reality – all in the Godardian cause of politicising representation (as opposed to making realist films with political messages). In some ways, however, an uncompromising stance against such features of mainstream cinematic communication as projection, identification and fantasy went against Bertolucci's personal grain, and already in *The Grim Reaper* and *Before the Revolution* his elegiac lyricism was apparent (for example, in the latter, the episode by the river with the aristocrat Puck).

Self-mockingly, but only just, he has the executive producer of *Before the Revolution*, playing a walk-on role, say: “*Une Femme est une femme* is far more *engagé* than all the films of De Santis and Lizzani, in a certain sense even of Franco [Francesco] Rosi, I insist. Cinema is a matter of style, and style is a matter of morality”. Bertolucci himself said, in disappointment at the achievements of his political documentaries: “There is no effective alternative distribution circuit. The cinema rebels against being treated as a mouthpiece, against being used like a mimeograph machine; a more intense political charge is carried by certain commercial films than by films made in a rigorous, politically ‘correct’ manner”. How was he to retain the honest admission of theatricality



Oedipus: can the son slay the father?

(that a film constructs a spectacle), to continue his analysis of the confused political identity of the Marxist Italian bourgeoisie of his generation, and to communicate and give pleasure to a wider audience, all at the same time? Where was he to find the financial input and the distributional outlet that would enable him to reconcile these goals? *Partner* had been made with state subsidy, and had done poorly at the box office (as had the earlier two features).

In 1964, the Italian state broadcasting corporation, RAI, had received figures that showed that together with news broadcasts, films were what viewers most appreciated on television. So they started a systematic programme of film-making at a number of levels: serials, telefilms, experimental films, and full-length feature films directed by new talents (Ermanno Olmi, the Taviani brothers, Liliana Cavani, Gianni Amelio, Miklos Jancso, Jean-Marie Straub, Marco Leto). The feature film programme really took off in 1970, and Bertolucci was one of the first directors they approached: “Once they had accepted the screenplay [of *The Spider's Stratagem*], which they did straight away with the first version, the RAI never interfered in the production. So I must say that so far [1970] it is the best producer I have ever had: a producer present economically and absent physically: hence complete freedom”.

At exactly the same time, he entered psychoanalysis (in February 1970; the film was shot in July and August). It is important to understand how his enthusiastic embracing of the dream

as a representation of psychic reality offered Bertolucci at least a partial solution to his formal problems. For him, watching films was like dreaming: the viewer desires, gazes upon what is desired, and watches himself or herself desire. As a director, he no longer needed to fear that he might mystify the audience by passing off constructed images as reality, if his theatrical representations were a *mise en scène* of fantasies. The spectacle offered the viewer was not just the “essence of wind”, but could be grounded in the psychic reality of the unconscious – our desires acquiring form in dreams. He could reconcile his portrayal of the ambiguities of the Italian bourgeois left with the pleasure of *Gone with the Wind*.

More than that, he could almost remake *Partner* in another key. For example, the concern with the artificiality of representation and with the theatre was amply met in *The Spider's Stratagem* by the location he selected to represent the realm of the Freudian unconscious, and of memory: the town of Tara. Sabbioneta is an extraordinary piece of planning, built 500 years ago in just over eighteen months by Vespasiano Gonzaga. The director and the lighting cameraman (Vittorio Storaro) lit it to look like a theatre, and posed figures in it to look like extras. The whole town at the end is wired for sound, and broadcasts Verdi's *Rigoletto*; the whole town is the theatre in which Athos senior performs his script in order to preserve the memory of the anti-fascist struggle.

The story and location of *The Spider's Stratagem* offered Bertolucci further scope for portraying the psychological splitting of the protagonist. In *Partner* it had been an alter-ego double, bringing about a splitting apart of the impotent thinker and the anarchical man of action; in *The Spider's Stratagem*, father and son (played by the same actor) are fused into one,

‘The cinema rebels against being treated as a mouthpiece, being used as a mimeograph’

the father an ambiguous anti-fascist of the 30s catching in his web a son who is striving to achieve adulthood in the inaction and confusion of middle-class Italy in the 60s.

So whereas Bertolucci and many of his critics have depicted *The Spider's Stratagem* as a complete turning point in the director's artistic career, and a rejection of the past, we can better understand it in terms of a continuity with the past, but made possible by a new approach to the material conditions of film-making, and a new formal freedom offered by a surrender to the eroticism of cinema. Before, Bertolucci edified his viewers by denying them pleasure; now he gives his viewers pleasure by means of the images he uses to edify them.

There is a stubborn integrity in Bertolucci's position. He rejected the category of art cinema as being meaningless for an artist whose job was to please and instruct his public, and for an Italian film-maker who wanted to confront Hollywood on its own terms, rather than to carve out a protected European art house corner for himself. He made *The Conformist* with Paramount's money, *Last Tango in Paris* with Paramount and eventually United Artists, and *1900* with Paramount, Fox and United Artists... Perhaps he has now got himself into another impasse, but we need not doubt that it will be worth waiting to see how he breaks out of it.

The RAI had no coherent scheme in which to frame the relations between television and the cinema; it simply co-opted film-makers to feed its screen. It had no plans for theatrically distributing its films after broadcasting them, and it did not impress upon film-makers any particular approach to the television medium. In approaching *The Spider's Stratagem*, Bertolucci and Storaro adopted a strange, but perhaps prescient, attitude. Bertolucci accepted the implications of the television public, but director and cameraman rejected at least partially the technical implications of the medium.

Television requires close shots, with figures prominent in the foreground; they photographed everything from a distance, with small figures moving slowly through large architectural compositions. Italy at the time broadcast only in black and white; they made the film in colour, and refused to hold contrast levels low, as required for the cathode ray tube, but rather made sharp tonal contrasts the leitmotiv of the film. *The Spider's Stratagem* was Storaro's first colour film, and Bertolucci conveyed to him the dreamlike atmosphere he wanted by showing him Magritte's painting *L'Empire des lumières*, where a warm yellow light shines from the centre of a blue landscape at dusk: the contrasts are those of the intensity of the light, and of the 'temperature' of the colours. This tonal quality pervades the film, and one of its characteristics is echoed in the composition: shots frame characters in or against buildings, with windows and doors that give on to other windows and doors, so that we are always looking right through buildings, just as at one moment we see 'through' an outdoor cinema screen to the landscape behind it. Everything has mysterious, but per-

'The knowledge my film was watched by millions gave me a new sense of responsibility'

haps vacuous, depths, which is in tune with Bertolucci's aim to create with Tara a "realm of the dead", the world of the unconscious, the memory of the past and the suggestion of the future. The present, active, adult world is excluded; the town is populated only by old men, some of whom act like little girls, and by children of ambiguous gender.

Yet some sequences have the warm intimacy of the televisual, as when the witch-like Draifa (played by Alida Valli, star of the late 30s and part, therefore, of the 'memory' that the film evokes) is shot just in head and shoulders while she strains to manoeuvre the drugged Athos' deckchair on the veranda, while in the background plays a 30s-style sentimental ballad.

Perhaps the slow-moving camera makes good television too – what Bertolucci has called the "tracking shot that works like a rural milk train", stopping here and there and then catching up with the protagonist who has moved on meanwhile, or else discovering someone or something we were not expecting. The long sequence shots (Athos' farewell to Draifa is a shot lasting three minutes and eleven seconds) and the frequent 360 degree pans are also effective. The sound is recorded direct (not dubbed, as is usual with Italian films), and the intensity of the green foliage combines with the swelling chant of the crickets and the occasional zap of a mosquito hitting the microphone to bring even to the small screen the sensual tranquillity of what Bertolucci recalls as an enchanted summer, in which he relived the rural Parma in which he had grown up.

The Spider's Stratagem was broadcast on RAI's first channel on Sunday evening, 25 October 1970, after the main news, and again (such a repetition was almost unheard of) on the following Friday. The Sunday audience was assessed at 4.5 million, and audience approval at 49 per cent, which is relatively low. (The film was not theatrically released in Italy, to the best of my knowledge, until 1972.) Bertolucci watched it: "For a cineaste like myself, used to making films for a restricted audience of intellectuals, it raised new problems. Together with the awareness of the fact that my language was still not perfectly clear, the knowledge that my film was watched by millions of people gave me a sense of responsibility that I had never had before". He had chosen a fairly straightforward 'mystery' narrative, and he had tried to make a transparent parable out of it. Nevertheless, he took the film in hand once more, and re-edited the final sequence.

Originally, the ending had just been the close-up of Athos junior delivering his speech at his father's commemoration. Bertolucci altered it by inserting scenes from the story we had just followed, together with four of those ubiquitous inserts of the town seen from out-

side across a cornfield, like an oasis in a desert. "While I was doing it, I said to myself: good heavens, it looks like a trailer for the film; but finally I realised that if it had in the end come out a little didactically, on the other hand I seemed to have made a generous gesture towards the television public, unused to a rather elliptical, mysterious film like this... The ending of the film seemed, and still seems, to me to help people to understand the central problem of the traitor and the hero".

Parma, and so Tara, is the world of his father, the poet before him, who reviewed films for the local paper and took his son to see them. The cinematic dream is Oedipal, as the son unmasks the father. Bertolucci fuses his representation of a personal past, and of a universal Oedipal conflict between generations and between artists, with a representation of the politically ambiguous identity that history has thrust upon the bourgeois, Marxist, intellectual, male Italian of the 60s. He achieves this with montage, with that ability to play with time that the cinema confers upon the artist.

Athos junior is gradually fused with the past and with his father, as the montage progressively becomes more audacious. Bertolucci uses film to manipulate time: with the tracking and the panning of the camera; with the pulling of focus (from foreground to background, as in the re-enactment of the murder in the theatre); with parallel editing; with illogical continuity (Beccaccia, the old fascist, rediscovered in an ever-changing theatre box); and with a *mise en scène* that juxtaposes past and present in the same shot (Draifa addressing the son in the present by looking towards the camera, in a shot that has the 1936 father standing in the background).

Borges' story plays with, and rejects, time; Bertolucci plays with and adores time. But this Oedipal shock has its own historical punch. Bertolucci's bourgeois Marxist generation is defined, and rendered impotent, by its historical conditioning, and by the 'memory' of the past: the myth of the Resistance, of its heroism and of its political purity. "In so many bourgeois Italians the decision to oppose fascism came about for libertarian, individualistic, cultural, anarchical reasons: even for reasons of good taste... Hence the fragilities, the compromises... In the figures of bourgeois anti-fascism there is always an element of ambiguity".

In *The Spider's Stratagem* Bertolucci makes this point sweetly and lyrically; in *The Conformist* he makes it surgically and ferociously. In all his films, he is analysing his own identity and that of his generation, trying to find out what space there is for effective action. *The Spider's Stratagem* marks the discovery of a space and an artistic form in which it was possible for him to communicate with a cinematic audience, and ushers in one of the most glorious 'middle periods' an artist could hope for.

● *The Spider's Stratagem* will play in Cardiff and Bristol in late August; in Brighton, Richmond, Derby, Manchester and Edinburgh in September; and in Hull, Poole, London and Nottingham in October

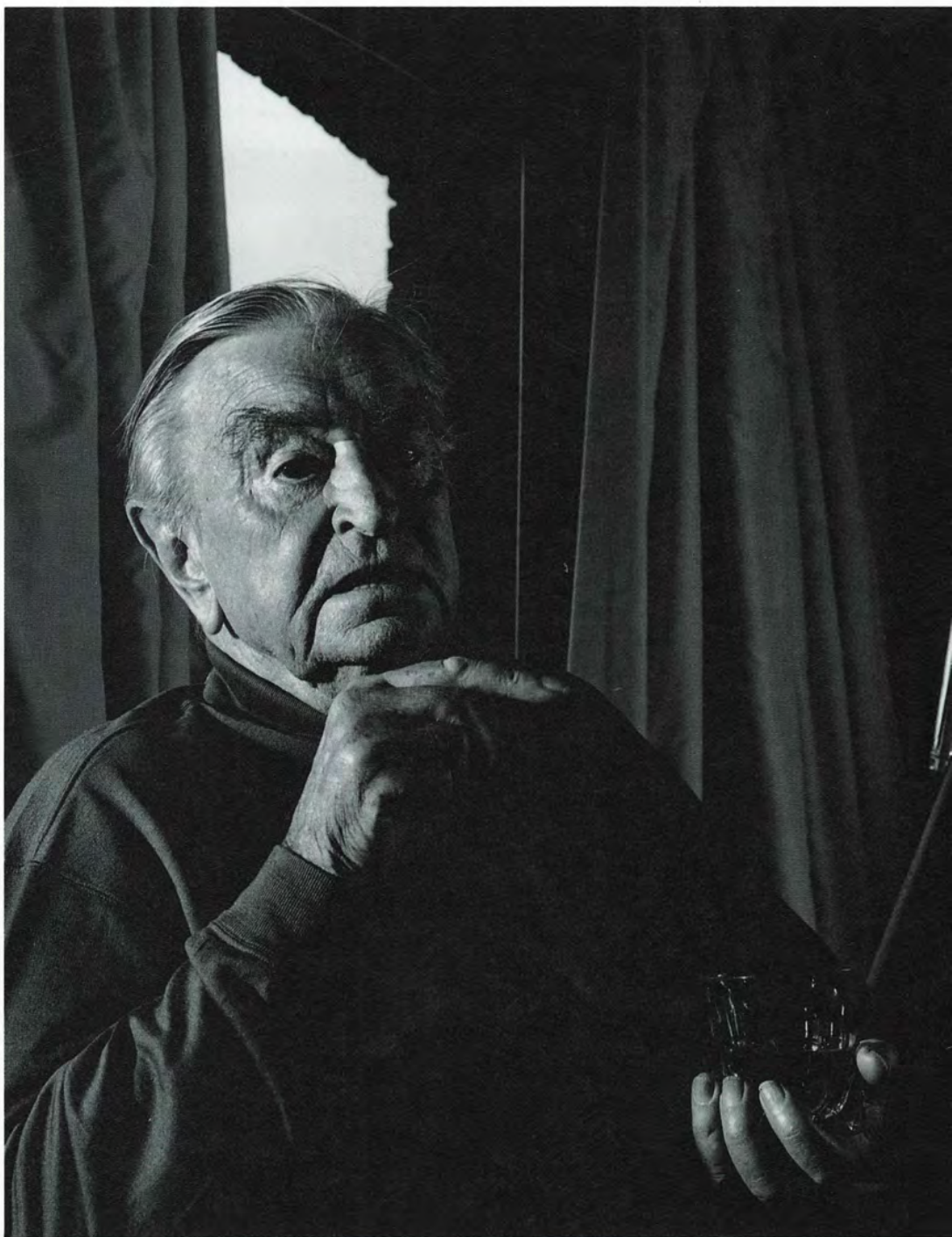
In my early career, I would often hire technicians who had worked with David Lean just to hear anecdotes of his working habits. The ongoing game was: "What would David Lean do with this shot? What lens would he use? How would he move his actors?", and so on. Of the many directors I admire, it is David Lean with whom I feel a great affinity. It is therefore a great pleasure to be able to express my admiration for him as a film-maker and to honour the friendship we shared during the last eight years of his life.

Born in the Edwardian era, Lean experienced first-hand the decline of the British Empire. He lived through two world wars and matured as an artist during the 50s, when Britain was being forced to re-examine her new role. His natural taste was for a mixture of the nineteenth-century novel and landscape painting of the same period – something he never tried, or wanted, to change. But having grown up during the demise of British influence in the world, he also had an acutely critical view of British society.

The storyteller

So Lean's work contains an interesting paradox: the strong visual and literary legacy of British culture, which he loved and understood so well, combined with biting insights into the ludicrous aspects of a nation being forced to accept a less important role in the world. A perfect example of this ability to illustrate Britain's dilemma is the portrayal of the colonel in *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957). Here is a man using the military discipline that was the result of hundreds of years of British tradition to survive the hardships, torture and degradation of being a Japanese prisoner of war, yet whose addiction to that same discipline and tradition has turned him mad. The man is both a hero and a fool – a remarkable device to illustrate the state of Britain as she clung to meaningless tradition in a futile attempt to save her identity in the face of declining power.

Lean offered us magnificent images and simple stories. He introduced the landscape into the emotions and dreams of his audience, and with his exquisite sensitivity to the ►



Dreaming in the light

Hugh Hudson, below, recalls the magnificent images and simple stories at the heart of David Lean's achievement





Filmography

born Croydon, 1908

died London, 16 April 1991

Educated at Quaker School, Leighton Park near Reading. Began work in father's accountancy firm, then entered Lime Grove Studios as a "number board boy (one step lower than a clapperboy)". Experience as camera assistant, assistant director, "one brief and better-forgotten episode as a wardrobe mistress", and cutting room assistant. In 1930, became chief editor at Gaumont Sound News, then British Movietone News. In 1931 editor for Paramount in Paris, then at British-Dominion Studios at Elstree; cut numerous 'quota quickies' and by the end of the decade had become "the highest paid cutter in Britain". Films as editor include: 'The Night Porter' (1930, director Sewell Collins), 'Escape Me Never' (1935, director Paul Czinner), 'As You Like It' (1936, director Paul Czinner), 'Pygmalion' (1938, directors Anthony Asquith, Leslie Howard), 'Major Barbara' (1941, director Gabriel Pascal; also assistant director and uncredited director of some sequences), '49th Parallel' (1941, director Michael Powell), 'One of Our Aircraft Is Missing' (1942, directors Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger).

In 1943, formed Cineguild production company with Ronald Neame and Anthony Havelock-Allan, dissolved 1950. Produced 'This Happy Breed', 'Blithe Spirit', 'Brief Encounter', 'Great Expectations', 'Oliver Twist', 'The Passionate Friends', 'Madeleine'. Also directed short films for the Leonard Cheshire Homes (1977: 'Tomorrow Is Yours: Come to Our Home' and 'A Hidden World') and worked uncredited on some sequences of 'The Greatest Story Ever Told' (1965, director George Stevens). Participated in 'Lost & Found: The Story of an Anchor', a short film for New Zealand television about Captain Cook made while he was researching his unfiled 'Bounty' project. Died while preparing an adaptation of Joseph Conrad's 'Nostromo'.

Films as Director: In Which We Serve

(1942, co-director Noël Coward)
"Noël used to go back to his dressing room with Gladys Calthrop to play this card game of four-pack Bezique, and then we'd call him when we were ready. Finally Noël said, 'Look, my dear, you know what you are doing. I'll just leave it to you, and I'll come down when I'm to be photographed'".

This Happy Breed
(1944, also co-adaptation)
Blithe Spirit
(1945, also co-adaptation)

Brief Encounter
(1945, also co-screenplay)
"British films have got themselves into their present position on what audiences call their 'reality'. What they really mean is that the best British films have integrity, a very different thing. If one were to put real life on the screen, it would be deathly dull. Films are not real. They are dramatised reality. You will be wondering why, in the light of all this, 'Brief Encounter' did not 'go' with the great new and enlightened British audience. I think the answer is that in this particular case we went too far, that is, from a box-office point of view... There were no big-star names. There was an unhappy ending to the main love-story. The film was played in unglamorous surroundings. And the three leading characters were approaching middle-age".

Great Expectations
(1946, also co-screenplay)

Oliver Twist
(1948, also co-screenplay)
"When the film came out, I didn't know what hit me. I was accused of being anti-Semitic. I wasn't anti-Semitic at all. I was just doing a Jewish villain".

The Passionate Friends
(1948, also co-adaptation)

Madeleine
(1950, also co-producer)

The Sound Barrier
(1952, also producer)

Hobson's Choice

(1953, also producer and co-screenplay)
Summer Madness
(1955, also co-screenplay)
"When David said, 'You have to fall into the canal', says Hepburn, 'I said, then, what the hell, I'll fall into the goddam canal. Anything to please David'... Telling of his boyhood visit to the set of 'Summer Madness', [Michael] Korda reported, 'Miss Hepburn herself, having taken a good look at the water in the canal, was anything but enthusiastic about the prospects, but neither Vincent [Korda] nor David Lean was willing to compromise with realism'".
The Bridge on the River Kwai (1957)
Lawrence of Arabia (1962)
"For the title role, Spiegel announced that the job would no doubt go to a newcomer from Lancashire, twenty-five-year-old Albert Finney... 'Finney worked four days, then quit', says David Lean. 'He told me he wasn't interested in becoming a star'... The next choice of both Lean and Spiegel was Marlon Brando. Their selection of an American to play the British military man was criticised by many, including his surviving brother, Professor A. W. Lawrence... Many more unlikely names were in the running. 'Montgomery Clift used to ring me weekly in Madrid, where I was living', says Lean,

'begging to play Lawrence... I had also thought of Richard Burton', Lean continues. 'He would have been marvellous'".

Doctor Zhivago (1965)
Ryan's Daughter (1970)

"We tried to portray a girl who had romantic dreams. Her romantic dream then came to her and we portrayed the love story between her and Christopher Jones in a purposely over-romantic way, almost like an erotic dream... We certainly made it intentionally over-romantic, so that the girl would have a frightening fall back to earth and realise that her heaven does not indeed exist".

A Passage to India
(1984, also screenplay, editor)

"Forster, oh dear, oh dear. I think he hated the English out there. And he was queer, and you can imagine how they must have disapproved of that - this damned Englishman working for a maharajah. The dislike was mutual, but I've toned down a lot of that... We've left them all sorts of bad things, I suppose, but they also got some very good things".

Quotations from 'David Lean' by Stephen M. Silverman, 'Penguin Film Review' 4 (1947); 'Contemporary Cinema' (February 1948); 'Take One' (November 1973); 'Films in Review' (May 1974); 'Film Comment' (January/February 1985)

◀ balance between the landscape and his characters held us spellbound for the duration of the film. He had a childlike attitude to life, open and always interested in other people's opinions. A good listener.

He was brought up in the shadow of his younger brother, Tangye, who was a brilliant scholar. David consequently felt an outcast in the family – the reason, no doubt, why for the rest of his life, he identified with the 'outsider'. He loved flowers and animals and spoke often of his childhood holidays in Cornwall. He was particularly affected by the light in that part of the world and by the eccentricity of the local people. A preoccupation with light and 'nutters': elements that are always to be found in his films.

He also spoke of his grandfather a great deal. He was an engineer and inventor. Among other things, he invented the famous hydraulic pump that rescued Brunel's ship *Great Eastern* (the Victorian equivalent of Concorde) as it lay ignominiously trapped in the Thames mud before its launch. This early involvement with his grandfather led to a lifelong fascination with machinery, from a boyhood love of trains to the later, almost sensual relationship with the camera. This childhood passion for trains never left him. A favourite game while filming *Brief Encounter* (1945) was for he and Celia Johnson, arms around each other, to stand as close as they dared to the edge of the platform on Carnforth station, to wait for the night express steam train *The Royal Scot* to rush past.

The train plays a central role in many of Lean's films. In *Doctor Zhivago* (1965), the train carrying Lara's husband, who has become an ardent revolutionary, represents the new movement that is forging its way through Russia. In *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), Lawrence is seen running along the top of the derailed train after it has been blown up, suddenly aware of his power; the image of his strutting silhouette on top of the train as he gathers his Arab supporters around him is a turning point in his character. In *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, there is the obsessive building of the railway bridge by the colonel, culminating in its explosion and the train hurtling down into the river, symbolising



David Lean: setting characters in the landscape

the futility of the man's endeavours. In *Summer Madness* (1955), the train is initially simply the way of getting to and from Venice, yet at the climax it is used as the bitter-sweet means of separating the two lovers. And in *Brief Encounter*, the entire story revolves round the arrival and departure of trains: pressure of time on an illicit romance.

This childlike quality, expressed in an almost simplistic view of good and bad which was so admired in films like *Great Expectations* (1946) and *Oliver Twist* (1948) at the beginning of Lean's career, was to become the subject of violent criticism following *Ryan's Daughter* (1970). After the opening of the film in New York, Lean was invited to a lunch at the Algonquin Hotel to discuss the film with a gathering of New York critics. It soon became apparent that this was not going to be an open debate, but a full-blooded attack, not only on the film, but on Lean himself. He was accused of 'being out of touch with modern audiences', 'only fit for making 16mm films – maybe in colour' and 'being overtly sentimental and blowing up a slight story to epic proportions'. The fact that *Ryan's Daughter* is the retelling of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* seemed to have escaped the critics' attention.

So this coven of self-appointed executioners, led by Pauline Kael, dismissed Lean as 'second rate' and 'out of date'. Although it could be argued that *Ryan's Daughter* lacks complexity, it is undeniably romantic and extraordinarily beautiful. It contains the true hallmark of a David Lean film: simple poetry. In my view, the only problem with the film is that it was made at a time when film-making was going through

radical changes. Lean never seemed to take on board the way cinema was beginning to deal with the realities of life. There had already been films like *This Sporting Life* (1963) by Lindsay Anderson and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1963) by Tony Richardson, while the French 'new wave' movement was well established. A return to an overtly romantic style was seen as anachronistic, especially alongside Lindsay Anderson's damning look at English public school life in *If...* (1968). I think the historical context of a film can be as important as the film itself, and this, I believe, is the reason for the downfall of *Ryan's Daughter*.

Perhaps because film is such a young art form, we don't have the objectivity to contain such diverse styles as Truffaut, Lean, Tarkovsky and Spielberg without having to make judgments about which is best. In painting, we can hail an exhibition by Constable while at the same time be amazed at the mysterious beauty of the paintings by the Boyle family. But I think this criticism applied more then, when *Ryan's Daughter* was made, than it does now.

The result of this devastating attack was a self-imposed exile from film-making for a period of fifteen years, during which time Lean travelled the world, visiting among other countries Kenya, India and Tahiti, where he spent a good deal of time. While living in Tahiti he became familiar with the language, discovering the word *Pwew* – an expression the Tahitians use when they are particularly upset about something and spiritually 'disappear' until things get better. David Lean went *Pwew* for fifteen years.

The picture-maker

When his self-esteem was finally restored and his spirit refreshed, Lean returned to making films with his adaptation of E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1984). It is an illustration of the frailty of the man that he took those words so much to heart. Frailty may seem a strange way to describe a man whose reputation on set was as the 'gentle dictator'; though to some, perhaps not so gentle. A man driven to achieve the perfect realisation of his ideas and ruthless in that pursuit. A man who found it easier to put

Right: 'Great Expectations', 1946. Miss Havisham educates Pip in the first of Lean's adaptations from Dickens



Above: 'Oliver Twist', 1948, another of Lean's child-eye views of power

Below: 'The Bridge on the River Kwai', 1957. The colonel (Alec Guinness) is one of Lean's most famous heroic fools



his feelings into his characters than into his own relationships. A wanderer who was able to portray the great forces of nature – the sea, the sky, snow and ice, the desert and the jungle – on his vast screen.

It was often said that David Lean had no time for actors, but there is no doubt that he had a way of extracting remarkable performances. Charles Laughton and Claude Rains were two actors he particularly loved working with. He thought Laughton had a 'magical' presence on film and found him a truly eccentric man. While trying to discover a succinct expression of his character in *Hobson's Choice* (1953), Lean came up with the notion of "lead in your feet and bubbles in your head", which describes Laughton's performance exactly. But you can't talk about David Lean's films without thinking also of Alec Guinness and John Mills, both of whom began their cinema careers with Lean and worked continually with him, giving some of their best performances under his direction. Guinness had a renowned love/hate relationship with Lean, which may well have contributed to the quality of his work; John Mills remained one of his closest friends from the early 40s until his death.

Lean always had a clear idea of how his characters should be portrayed and would not accept much deviation. He had a reputation for being tough with his actors and for refusing to let them indulge in "their natural propensity for histrionics". Yet once the rules were laid down, Lean allowed his actors considerable space for interpretation and he showed a genuine understanding of their exposed position in front of the camera. What he required most was "horsepower", which was his description of that harnessing of energy, available to be tapped, but not always revealed.

Lean would set his actors in the landscape by giving them the feeling of being in that time and at that place. This is where the talent of a great director comes in – setting a scene (*mise en scène*), creating a climate, painting a picture within the story and at the same time never losing the telling of that story. "Deal with each scene as if it's the most important in the film", he would say. "Clarity, clarity. The most

important thing of all. Always make it clear what your intention is".

There was always a long gestation period between Lean's films. More often than not, it would take four or five years for a project to be chosen, considered, scripted and rescripted, ached over; then the struggle for finance and finally the preparation for production. He liked to work with the same crew whenever possible and created a kind of David Lean repertory company. Among the members of his 'rep' were Robert Bolt, with whom he worked on four films (*Doctor Zhivago*, *Ryan's Daughter*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Nostromo*), Freddie Young, John Box, Maurice Jarre, Wynn Ryder and Maggie Unsworth, who worked with him from *In Which We Serve* (1942) until his last film. It was Freddie Young who said: "Most directors know nothing about photography", meaning that David Lean did. One only had to look at his personal photographs to see where the inspiration for his cinematography came from.

The cutter

David Lean's skills as an editor are legendary. It was during his collaboration with Michael Powell on *49th Parallel* (1941) that these skills first came into play. Powell, faced with thousands of feet of film and a sick editor, found himself in a difficult situation. Someone suggested Lean, who, after viewing the material, said, "You need an editor!" His outstanding ability as an editor is constantly in evidence; in particular I admire his brilliant use of montage. The teaching of Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion* (1938), the journey by jet to Cairo in *The Sound Barrier* (1952) and Charles Laughton's drunken game with the moon in *Hobson's Choice* are outstanding examples of his skill.

Another feature of Lean's editing skill is the way he thrusts his audience into the story within a few minutes of the lights going down. Images like the pregnant woman struggling across the heath through a violent storm in *Oliver Twist*; the early moment when Magwitch grabs Pip in the graveyard during the first few minutes of *Great Expectations* and the prologue of *The Sound Barrier*, where the spitfire pilot attempts to break through. "Grab them within

the first five minutes" was Lean's philosophy, and grab them he did. One of my favourite moments, though, is towards the end of *A Passage to India*, where the boat engine stops to denote the death of Mrs Moore. A simple device, but very moving.

If gaining Oscars is a measure of success, then Lean must be the greatest film-maker in history. His films collected twenty-six Oscars between them, including two for himself as director and four for cinematography. No other British film has done so well at the box office as *Doctor Zhivago*, which accrued \$47.5 million.

Films today are more often than not dominated by financial concerns, and hence are often rushed. Few directors now have the chance to work on an epic scale like David Lean. But perhaps the epic style isn't required any more. The US, as the dominant world power, dictates our tastes, particularly in films, since the cinema is at the heart of US culture. But American interest in making the epic film seems negligible. It may be that this style is more suited to Europeans with their interest in history and culture and the interrelationship of nations and their politics.

Lean's films transcend style and fashion. He chose his subjects without a thought for public taste or intellectual pretension, but because he liked the idea. As a consequence of this sincerity, his films still stand up to scrutiny and continue to be loved by their audiences. Even at the age of eighty-two, on the eve of his sixth marriage, his eyes sparkled as we discussed the merits of possible actors for his forthcoming film of Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo*.

Lean was one of a quartet of British film directors – Carol Reed, Michael Powell, David Lean and Alfred Hitchcock – who were among the greatest film-makers in the world. And Lean, more than any other, gave British cinema the international reputation that has helped all of us subsequent British film-makers to reach US and world audiences. It is fashionable, and typically British, to belittle our native talent. But we, the next generation, owe David Lean an immeasurable debt.

● Hugh Hudson's films include *Chariots of Fire* and *Revolution*



Below: 'Ryan's Daughter', 1970, intentionally over-romantic. Right: 'A Passage to India', 1984, Peggy Ashcroft learning the limits of Englishness

Left: 'Lawrence of Arabia', 1962, Lawrence (Peter O'Toole), washed in light. Above: 'Doctor Zhivago', 1965, love among the ruins





Nietzsche's

boy

Lording it over the lower species, and in love with the idea of power, the triumphant Schwarzenegger rather than the suffering

Stallone is the reigning Hollywood superman. J. Hoberman looks at his new image and explores the reasons for his super-fame

"The more contact I have with humans, the more I can learn", ponderously enunciates killer cyborg Arnold Schwarzenegger in a rare lull during his multimegabuck superspectacular *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. The accent may defy transcription, but the humanising (or is it Americanising?) of our Arnold continues.

A film offering the most vivid thermonuclear firestorm in screen history, *Terminator 2* is more a remake than a sequel, less a homage than an obliteration. Among other things, it sets out to efface the implacable robot menace of *The Terminator* that elevated Arnold to superstardom back in 1984. Opening unheralded on the eve of the US presidential election, *The Terminator* presented an alternative of sorts to the Reaganite 'new morning', unleashing der Arnold as the most compelling Frankenstein monster for half a century. *Terminator 2*, described by its director-writer-producer James Cameron as "the first action movie advocating world peace", offers the monster's redemption

T2 (as production company Carolco is hoping we'll call it) is more like *E.T.* 2, with a con-

tinual backbeat of *Die Hard* pyrotechnics – artfully pulverised walls and shattered glass, Evel Knievel cycle stunts, exploding skyscrapers and incinerated children. This time around, however, the bad old terminator (Arnold) protects the twelve-year-old future Messiah rather than trying to destroy his mother. Pitting the quaintly old-fashioned terminator against a new, liquid metal prototype, *Terminator 2* makes the earlier model seem almost innocent. In a sense, it employs the same principle as US electoral politics: just when you think you've seen the worst...

The Terminator cost a mere \$6 million; *Terminator 2*, whose budget is being estimated at fifteen times that, may be the most expensive movie ever made. And as we career into the 90s, it is the Arnold who seems the greatest of those extraterrestrial/immigrant/supernatural strangers in paradise who have wandered through the movies of the past decade, validating America's suburbs and shopping malls. It is Arnold who is the current American ideal, number eight (highest ranked actor) in *Enter-*

tainment Weekly's '101 Power People'. A self-made millionaire married to the glamorous newsreader and JFK niece Maria Shriver, our Arnold received \$12 million to play the eponymous hero of *Kindergarten Cop* (1990), while in an ancillary promotional move his patron George Bush anointed him chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. For *Terminator 2*, his estimated \$15 million recompense included a Gulfstream G-III jet.

Yet, more than a public servant, Arnold is a strategic asset. During the 80s his films grossed \$1 billion worldwide. He is the most bankable star in the US, Germany and Japan. (In the UK, he should soon surpass Mel Gibson, although the French continue to prefer Depardieu, Gibson and even Dustin Hoffman.) In a story knocked off *Time's* cover late last December by a piece wondering whether Kuwait was worth ►

A man's superman: with his metallic flesh, Schwarzenegger in 'The Terminator' (1984), top, became

the most compelling monster in fifty years; the new 'Terminator 2', right, has the monster redeemed



◀ the price of war, Richard Corliss called him "the most potent symbol of worldwide dominance of the US entertainment industry".

While generations of would-be movie stars were compelled to Anglicise their names, this one sports the least pronounceable, most problematic moniker ever to emblazon an American movie marquee. Arnold is bad enough. As pronounced by an American, Schwarzenegger sounds practically obscene. Elevating those twenty letters is no small feat. But then, while other stars were born under the signs of Marx or Freud, this Austrian musclemán evokes that third prophet of modernity, Friedrich Nietzsche.

In *Conan the Barbarian* (1982), director John Milius introduced the five-time Mr Universe with a quote from *Thus Spake Zarathustra*: "That which does not kill us makes us stronger". Arnold's public statements reek of "will to power", even as his image fulfils its manifestation, the *Übermensch*. (In the two *Conan* films, Schwarzenegger lords over the lower species – wrestling gorillas, punching out horses, cold-cocking camels – as if to illustrate Wilhelm Reich's observation that "the theory of the German superman has its origin in man's effort to disassociate himself from the animal".)

Even der Arnold's his most famous line – the "I'll be back" delivered with the full flourish of dull robotic menace in the original *Terminator* and echoed in *Kindergarten Cop* – has intimations of the Eternal Return. Yes, Arnold has willed the return of the American Dream. His parents, he says, wanted him to be a skier or play soccer, but he chose bodybuilding because "it was a very American sport, and I thought, 'If I do well, it could take me to America'".

Culture of narcissism

But would the Arnold have achieved stardom during the breakdown years of the late 60s or early 70s? First had to come the decline of the Western and the universalism of hyperreal cartoon imagery, the canonisation of an antithesis (Dustin Hoffman or Woody Allen), the culture of narcissism, and the deployment of the artist's own person as sculptural material in Body Art. To become the Arnold, Schwarzenegger required the 80s fitness craze, the fifteen-year regime of 'body horror' movies, the proliferation of environmental cancers, the plague of Aids, the Reagan *Jawohl*. He had to transcend the suspect, sweaty fetishism of his chosen discipline and overcome suspicion about his sexual orientation. *Stay Hungry* (1976), the first movie in which Arnold had an important role, includes a scene in which a woman enquires whether his character is gay. Remarkably, this bit is reprised in *Kindergarten Cop*.

Still, for all the laboriously inscribed love interest in his recent movies, our Arnold is a man's man – or rather, a man's superman, or perhaps the simulation of a man's superman. "Consider this a divorce", he ripostes, shooting his treacherous pseudo-wife through the forehead in last year's *Total Recall*. Der Arnold perfected male character armour long before he became a movie star: "I can hide my feelings

under my muscles", he told photographer George Butler, who with something of his subject's prescience has been documenting Arnold's thoughts and triceps since the mid-70s.

Not simply personifying the notion of the film star as an expensive expanse of well-lit torso, our Arnold returns the movies to their fairground origins. His seemingly indestructible body is, as *Time* observed, "its own stunning special effect". The sloping planes of his smooth, simian features are as chiselled as a comic book superhero. He is the blockbuster given human – or at least, humanoid – form. Mapped, quantified, evaluated, the Schwarzenegger torso is less a sex object than an object lesson, recapitulating the post-Renaissance transformation of the human body into something to be manipulated and rationalised, surveyed and regulated, subjected to the institutional discipline of prisons, schools, hospitals.

With his exaggerated 'perfect' form, the Arnold exemplifies those sci-fi cyborgs whose bionic technobodies render the human obsolete. ("When I'm training for a competition, I can be what some people call inhuman, but really I think it's more like being superhuman", he told Butler.) 'John Matrix', the name by which he is called in the 1985 *Commando*, evokes both living cartilage and mass production. In *The Terminator*, the Arnold chose to play just such a matrix of metallic flesh and pseudo-human circuitry, as the movie invited us to share the joy of being a machine ("what some people call inhuman") by providing numerous point-of-view shots from the perspective of the Arnold's computerised videoterminal brain.

But even when Arnold does not play a machine, his behaviour is typically shown as an artificial construction. In *Twins* (1988), he has been genetically designed (by a German scientist, no less) to be a superman, then kept sequestered from the world. Arriving in America, an innocent in short pants, our Arnold must be taught by his dwarfish brother Danny DeVito to cope with the subterfuge of civilisation, even be tutored in his sexual instincts. In the far more radical *Total Recall*, the Arnold's memory is repeatedly wiped out and reconstructed, demonstrating that his personality, his personal history and his perspective are no less objectified than his body.

Given this materialism, it is hardly surprising that Arnold's movies are perceived as much as investments as they are entertainment. (T2 was reviewed in the business section of the *New York Times* a week before it opened.) As a movie star and media personality, our Arnold is highly self-conscious. Albeit self-invented, the Arnold has a sense of himself as a historical being: "With *Rocky*, I think Stallone did a big service to my career because he opened up a whole new type of movie, where the body is accepted and people go to see the body". (Somewhat naively, our Arnold predicted that *Conan* would be his *Rocky*.)

Indeed, Arnold's relationship with Stallone seems to have been a virtual subtext in both the 1984 *Rocky IV* (the Soviet fighter Drago resembling nothing so much as Arnold gone

blond) and the 1986 *Cobra* (Sly appropriating *Terminator* shades while his nemesis suggests Schwarzenegger gone to seed). And this despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that Arnold had helpfully supported Stallone consort Brigitte Nielsen in her ill-fated *Red Sonia* (1985).

Cary Grant with pecs

When in a 1988 *Playboy* interview, Schwarzenegger's interlocutor referred to Stallone as his "friend", our Arnold strenuously begged to differ: "He is not my friend... I make every effort that is humanly possible to be friendly to the guy, but he just gives off the wrong vibrations. Whatever he does, it always comes out wrong". Unlike the tormented Stallone, the nonchalant Schwarzenegger is not haunted by the failure of Vietnam. Rather than dramatise old grievances or wallow in self-pity, *Predator* (1987) coolly reduces the war to the level of a videogame monster from outer space. Moreover, born and raised in neutral Austria, der Arnold is similarly unencumbered by the rigid categories of Cold War thinking. In *Commando*, he plays an East German immigrant; in *Red Heat*, his Russian cop is the ideal right wing law enforcer – militaristic, hostile (when not oblivious) to civil liberties, economical in his instinctual application of justice.

The truth is, Sly has no *savoir faire*, while the Ivan Reitman comedies *Twins* and *Kindergarten Cop* allowed Arnold to become, as *People* had it, "Cary Grant with pecs". As early as *Commando*, our Arnold began to temper his aggression with corny puns and callous wisecracks in the manner of James Bond. His comedies deform the notion of amiability no less. We treasure the Arnold's tender concern for his stunted twin – whether it be Danny DeVito, George Bush or ourselves – because it is backed up by the threat of maximum force. We applaud Arnold's diligent public service in *Kindergarten Cop*, however threatening. "Stop whining. You kids are soft – you lack discipline", he tells his five-year-old charges, teaching them to respond to police whistles, rationalising their chaotic play into regimented, meaningless activity.

Most American heroes are bugged by authority, but Schwarzenegger, the son of a cop, is not a cop-hater – despite T2's clever opposition of Arnold's biker-clad terminator against the newer, police-disguised model. On the contrary: "My relationship to power and authority is that I'm all for it. People need somebody to watch over them and tell them what to do. Ninety-five per cent of the people in the world need to be told what to do and how to behave".

In *The Running Man* (1987), which unconvincingly attacked the cartoon world of the high 80s – the very robo-entertainment that provided the backdrop to Schwarzenegger's climb to fame – our Arnold mocks futile dreamers of social reform and demands immediate action. Order and discipline are the stuff of his fantasy life: "I was always dreaming about very powerful people", he confided to Butler. "Dictators and things like that".

Which "things like that", you might well ask? Alternatively perceived as comic or sinister

For all the love interest, our Arnold is a man's man, or rather a man's superman, or perhaps the simulation of a man's superman



Heavyweight champions: Arnold in 'Conan the Barbarian', top; Stallone and his opponent, a blond Arnold look-alike, in 'Rocky IV', above; and the gentler Arnold in 'Kindergarten Cop', below



ter, the sound of a German accent serves self-consciously to unite Americans as Americans against an alien order. Camp fascist that he is, Milius attempted to shock the liberal media by opining that his *Conan* would have been popular in 30s Germany. The transplanted Dutch director, Paul Verhoeven, couldn't resist a similar gag, ending *Total Recall* with a mystical Alpine apotheosis worthy of Leni Riefenstahl. But our Arnold is not Conrad Veidt, a Nazi victim compelled to play Nazi villains. Unlike any previous star, he embraces and embodies the covertly admired Teutonic virtues.

The Arnold's autobiographical accounts are unselfconsciously filled with references to "the Master Plan", "iron discipline", and his own compulsive "neatness". An American citizen since 1983, he has scarcely shed his Austrian identity. Neither has his *Heimat* forgotten him. Kurt Waldheim's wedding present, delivered to the Kennedy family compound at Hyannisport, was a larger-than-life sculpture of a grinning, *Lederhosen*-clad Arnold hoisting up his new bride, herself dressed in the laced-up blouse and *Dirndl* of a Bavarian peasant.

America's reigning male star is *a priori* a political figure, as well as a didactic one. "The most important American of our time is John Wayne", wrote theatre critic Eric Bentley in 1971. "Granted that all good things come from California, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan are only camp followers of Wayne, supporting players in the biggest Western of them all". From the Bicentennial through the Iran-Contra hearings, Stallone provided Americans with a decade's worth of political metaphor, while Clint Eastwood's old movies continued to supply tough-guy rhetoric through the 1988 presidential election – when, ever mindful of the wimp factor, George Bush campaigned alongside der Arnold and Chuck Norris. Thus, Arnold's innocent statements ("The joy in public office is a tremendous idea. I think it could be the greatest challenge yet", he told *Entertainment Weekly*) are a factor of the seriousness with which he takes his exalted position.

It is time, as George Bush proposed (and *Premiere* seconded), for a "kinder, gentler" Arnold. As *Kindergarten Cop* signalled, our Arnold is now a father. He has done penance for the sins of his fatherland, pledging \$250,000 to the Simon Wiesenthal Center, which reciprocated with a dinner at the Century Plaza in LA honouring Arnold's work on behalf of physical fitness and handicapped children. This astonishing event featured a full-dress Marine colour guard, a US flag secretly stitched together by the inmates of the Mauthausen concentration camp carried into the ballroom by a group of Holocaust survivors, and a speech by George Bush. Not long afterwards, *Variety* reported Schwarzenegger's plans to run for senator from California, possibly as early as 1992.

Like Stallone, Schwarzenegger might be said to enact the masculine. The power of Stallone's alter egos, Rocky and Rambo, is, however, predicated on their ability to absorb physical punishment. (Rocky, in particular, embodies the pathos of the proletariat – the man who's only

capital is his body.) But even as Rocky devolved and the Gulf War relegated Rambo to a joke – a figure mocked by Saddam Hussein and debunked by US commanders – the Arnold, who once cheerfully asserted that "for me, pain is pleasure", had already rendered Stallone's suffering obsolete.

While Stallone's movies were turgid exercises in regaining national self-respect, the vehicles that made Schwarzenegger a star are distinguished by their can-do attitude and insouciantly surplus carnage. On a per capita basis, the Arnold has surely racked up the highest body count in movie history. In *Commando*, he single-handedly kills dozens, if not hundreds, to save a single life. In *Raw Deal*, he decimates the Chicago mob, accomplishing "a hundred years of police work in a single afternoon". Unlike his macho predecessors, der Arnold has been an equal opportunity terminator, killing women on screen not only in *The Terminator* (where it is the subject of the movie), but, most famously, in *Total Recall*.

The perfect dad

In the new improved *Terminator 2*, Arnold kneecaps his opponents rather than blowing them away. The bloodlust in the world's greatest demolition derby is transferred to his former victim, Sarah (Linda Hamilton, her movie career seemingly on hold since she first played Arnold's snuff object). An even more crazed Rambette than Sigourney Weaver in *Aliens*, Hamilton is the mother not only of its Messiah but of all eco-terrorists – single-handedly pulverising a suburban ranch house and terrorising a family into submission. Although her character gets to trump Arnold's curtailed anti-social behaviour (reduced now to punching out pay phones to get a quarter), her nurturing side is not completely absent. Around the time that the terminator begins to wonder why it is that people cry, Sarah realises that this half-domesticated killer cyborg is the perfect dad.

Potent symbol of worldwide domination, our Arnold reconciles father and destroyer, America and Germany (and Russia), man and machine, freedom and authority, terminator and redeemer, Rambo and Cary Grant, gym class and kindergarten, teacher and cop, the barbaric past and the awful future, the triumph of the will and the death of the subject, American hegemony and American vulnerability. Proudly wasteful and bizarrely self-serving, *Terminator 2* suggests the merging of Schwarzenegger and Schwarzkopf. This is truly the Desert Storm of action flicks – mindboggling display of state of the art F/X angled at the international, as well as US, market.

Not only does T2 advocate 'world peace', it illustrates the concept of 'collateral damage'. Too kind and gentle to massacre his opponents, too thorough and butch to let them live, too ambitious and socialised to divorce any more wives, our Arnold packs the cinema with invisible corpses. For an encore, he has enlisted Verhoeven to direct him in a twelfth-century version of Operation Desert Storm. They shall call it *The Crusades*.

As a rare series of screenings of Ghatak's films opens in Britain, Pervaiz Khan introduces his work. Overleaf, film-makers and critics

explore the sources, achievements and legacy of a man equally at home with Eisenstein, Tagore and Indian melodrama



Ritwik Ghatak

Ritwik Ghatak in 'Jukti Takko Ar Gappo', 1974

and some directions for the future

Today, with the shaking up of the post-war world order, the terms 'migrants', 'refugees', 'borders' and 'national identity' have become part of the cultural and political agenda in Europe and North America. But for the 'Third World', or rather the underdeveloped world, these questions have existed for the greater part of this century. India in 1947 saw the 'largest migration in history', for at the very moment of its freedom it was divided, its western and eastern regions becoming the 'Muslim homeland' of Pakistan. Partition led to the migration of ten million people across the newly established borders. It is estimated that half a million people were slaughtered in the violence that flooded the country.

Ritwik Ghatak was born in 1925 in Dhaka, East Bengal, the capital of present-day Bangladesh. While he was young, his family moved to Calcutta. It was during the period of 1943-5

that his political awakening took place - anti-fascism, the Japanese attack on Britain's Asian empire, the British retreat and the Bengal famine, in which two million died.

Ghatak had become a Marxist activist by 1946, the time when the communal rioting foreshadowing Partition began. He was among those who believed that Partition was not historically destined. In the space of two days in mid-August, 5,000 people were killed in Calcutta. Out of a desire to protest against the "oppression and exploitation" he saw, Ghatak began to write short stories - by the time of his death over 100 of these had been published. He was drawn to IPTA (Indian People's Theatre Association), a cultural wing of the Communist party of India, and worked within it as an actor/playwright/director until 1954.

Ghatak's interest in film-making began to grow in 1948. In 1949 and 1951 he was assis-

tant director and actor in two films. Film-making for him seemed an obvious extension of his work in the theatre, with the added advantage that a film could reach a far greater audience than any play. Subrata Banopadhyay, who knew him from his IPTA days onwards, summed up this period: "Ritwik Ghatak came to films from the stage. Actually one should go even beyond this and say that it was his experience of the war years in undivided Bengal and the final phase of the freedom struggle, culminating in Partition that ultimately brought him to films. His years with theatre were only a phase, a very important one, in his search for a medium of expression that would enable him to immortalise the soul of a people in turmoil and torment".

In 1953 Ghatak was voted best actor and director for his theatre work. This was also the year in which he directed *Nagarik*, the first of

Ritwik Ghatak, 'Film and I', 1963

Film is, basically, a matter of personal statement. All arts are, in the final analysis. And film seems to be an art. Only, film is a collective art. It needs varied and numerous talent.

It does not follow that film is not personal. It may be, at one end, the case of a collective personality, and on the other, may bear the stamp of one individual's temperament upon all the others' creative activities.

To be art, either one or the other must be the case. Any work that lacks style and viewpoint necessarily lacks personality – and ceases to be art.

To my mind, this is the very root of the matter. Some hodge-podge thrown together, stylistically divergent images strung together by the device of intrigue and 'story matter', may be a good evening's entertainment, but no sir, it is not art. Such products abound all around us. One should resign oneself to these sad facts of life. Sometimes one may get great pleasure out of them, but not artistic pleasure.

That is why, even such a considerable artist as John Ford becomes considerable only at intervals. The rest of present-day Hollywood, of course, does not count.

I accept that these very 'story matters' and intrigues and howling good situations are raw materials of art. But raw meat is not exactly Moghlai kebab. A cook comes

somewhere in between. A cook, that is, the artist's personality.

The moment the artist enters, things come throbbing to life. From moment to moment, you realise with sudden shocks, that it is your innermost feelings and unnamed emotions that are being given voice to. You, in a word, have a revelation.

That is why the seers of Upanishads are called poets. The poet is the archetype of all artists. Poetry is the art of arts.

Trying to crawl back to the origins of cinema and exalting the still camera plus motion formula are ludicrous attempts. As ludicrous, say, as trying to go back to Dionysiac orgies and satyric mimes and masks of Thespis will be today in matters of the stage. The same can be resolved with a sense of the contemporary, of course, but in a synthesis on a higher level, such as *Strange Interlude* of O'Neil or Strindberg's *Dream Play*, or more aptly in Brecht's experimentation. *Organon* remains the most brilliant attempt at such a synthesis.

And that is precisely what is happening in the hands of all the masters of cinema, from Flaherty down to Fellini and Antonioni. My first film was called a picaresque episodic film along the lines of the eighteenth-century Spanish novel *Gil Blas De Santillane*, the second was called a film of documentary approach, the next was a

melodrama, and the fourth nothing at all, just no film.

To my mind, I am only groping. Groping to find the most proper expression for the theme at hand. Sometimes I may have connected, sometimes gone wide of the mark. I have tried to experiment with forms of story, treatment, styles of taking, images etc. Each one of my films is quite different from the others, though I fear my personality and inclinations are in all of them. From the compositional point of view, all the films have divergent balancing principles thought to be inherent in the theme. In the sound tracks, including the music, I have tried to weave different patterns.

It is the nuances I am after, the elusive, fleeting nuances. They contain the life-spark.

Any story is good material if it contains the scope for those nuances, even the songs and dances are not loads around your neck. They are creative elements with tremendous potentials, if the theme and approach calls for them.

There are so many genres. One accepts melodrama as one. I do not believe in the film's privileges being turned into dogma (à la Dr Kracauer). I do not abhor abstraction, scientific or otherwise. I believe in organising my filmic elements, even if one wants to catch and portray the very flow of life itself.

I do feel a quickening of heart

when the camera shows the instantaneous, the casual, the proverbial ripples in the water, the everyday glory of a sunset, or an involuntary twitching of a painstricken face. But I do not know out of hand the passions of an Othello or a drunken clown's tirade about life to a ballerina who is sick at heart.

I think a truly national cinema will emerge from the much abused form of melodrama when truly serious and considerate artists will bring the pressure of their entire intellect upon it. After all Mizoguchi and Kurosawa and Kinugasa took the *Noh* and *Kabuki* in their hands and squeezed supremely personal statements out of them.

The prospect is exciting, is it not?

Filmography

born Dhaka, 4 November 1925
died Calcutta, 6 February 1976

Nagarik (The Citizen) 1952-3
Ajantrik (Pathetic Fallacy) 1958
Bari Theke Paliye (The Runaway) 1959
Meghe Dhaka Tara (The Cloud Capped Star) 1960
Komal Gandhar (E Flat) 1961
Subarnarekha 1965
Titash Ekti Nadir Naam (A River Called Titah) 1973
Jukti Takko Ar Gappo (Reason, Argument and Story) 1974

the eight feature films he completed over a twenty year period. On the rare occasions these films have been seen by Western audiences, critics have referred to him as 'neo-neo-realist' or 'post-Brechtian' – wholly inadequate, not to say misleading, labels for a film-maker who managed to bring together Indian mythological symbolism and folk and musical traditions in order to raise questions about identity, nation, race and class. Ghatak was very pragmatic about why he had been drawn to cinema: "I came into films not because I wanted to make films. Tomorrow if I could find a better medium, I would throw away cinema. I don't love films... I have used the cinema as a weapon, as a medium to express my views".

Despite his protestations, Ghatak had a finely tuned understanding and love of the form. It was this understanding that he passed on to his students during his term as Professor

of Film Direction at the Film and Television Institute of India in 1966-7. He exerted a profound influence on his students, the best known of whom are John Abraham, Mani Kaul and Kumar Shahani.

For Ghatak, sound and music were an integral part of the language of film. He was a disciple of Ustad Allaaddin Khan, one of the greatest exponents of Indian classical music. The film tradition which Ghatak inspired has to be viewed in relation to the tradition of Indian classical music. Here the *ustad* or *guru* (teacher) encourages the disciples not to copy, but to find their own voice: tradition is something fluid rather than something fossilised.

Ghatak died at the age of fifty of alcohol abuse. He left behind almost 100 articles and reviews on different aspects of cinema, numerous plays, various film scripts, three novels and most importantly eight films. "An artist has to

have the cunning mischievousness of a child. He must go on dreaming secretly, after all, what is art but capturing for ever the moment happening, something which has just happened, had not happened before and will never happen again. With his ears wide open and with piercing sight he has to draw and express the ineffable in it, the growing and living in it, so that it may leave some directions for the future, may draw a golden line somewhere".

● Ritwik Ghatak's films, as well as films by Mani Kaul, Kumar Shahani and recent films from the Film and Television Institute of India, will be screened during the Birmingham International Film and Television Festival. A conference on the 'Ghatak Tradition' will take place on 28 September. During October a selection of the films will also be showing at the Cornerhouse, Manchester, the Watershed, Bristol and the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London

John Akomfrah, film-maker whose 'Who Needs a Heart' opens soon

In *Jukti Takko Ar Gappo*, Nilkantha, an alienated Bengali intellectual, is struggling to come to terms with the social impact of the war of liberation in Bangladesh. Caught up in the agrarian tensions created by the Naxalite movement – a Marxist guerrilla group – in eastern India, he is a constitutionally ill-equipped figure: a drunk about to be reunited with his estranged wife; a man committed to radical social change but who is not a Naxalite. Nilkantha wants 'development' but lacks both the means and the will to bring it about. He is a prisoner of uncertainty, forever tottering on the brink of a chaos which promises both redemption and annihilation.

In a series of impressionistic, fragmented episodes, Nilkantha, the pre-Partition intellectual, weighs up the options open to Bengali intellectuals. His musings set up a dialectic of contesting claims – between the regional and the national, the local and the universal. Through these contrasting claims we are presented with a 'reality' made up of what Ghatak once called "innumerable and unwieldy patterns and crosscurrents of forces" in which a search for an 'eternal' becomes a rummage "in the things of the moment". All Ghatak's films have this quality.

At the end of the film, Nilkantha, played by Ghatak himself, is accidentally shot by the police in a raid on a Naxalite enclave. He dies talking about the loves in his life. It was the last film Ghatak made.

I came across the films of Ritwik Ghatak by chance. In the summer of 1984, the Pesaro Film Festival in Italy put together an ambitious retrospective of Indian cinema in which mainstream melodramas (*Pakeesah*) were shown alongside Parallel Cinema classics (*In Search of Famine*). In seminars on neo-realism and the Indian cinema or on the influence of Bresson on new directors, Ghatak's name surfaced in every debate. His re-evaluation of the epic in popular cultural forms; his singular re-emphasis on sound and music; his insistence on turning a 'local' trauma – the Partition of India – into a worthy cinema subject became the frame used to discuss Indian cinema. Satyajit Ray was seen to provide some of the answers, but it was Ghatak people turned to for all the questions.

Much has been written about the complex interplay of ideas from Brecht, Eisenstein, Marx and Tagore in Ghatak's writings. And from his writings of the late 50s and early 60s it is clear that he was also reading and using Joseph Campbell, twenty years before George Lucas made

Campbell's studies of myth the bible of the 'New Hollywood'. It is the fact that he turned to these thinkers that sets him apart from anything else in Indian cinema at the time.

In his recent collection of essays, Hans Magnus Enzensberger speaks about a modern passion for "consistency at any cost" which wills that we make cult figures out of those untainted by "doubt, compromise and equivocation". "I am only groping", Ghatak once wrote. "Groping to find the most proper expression for the theme at hand". This "groping" produced a restlessness with, though not an antipathy to, genre, narrative and ideas.

Ghatak combined a fondness for experimentation and abstraction with a desire to recast Indian myths in a new materialistic light. And he took his concoction of desires and gropings to the prestigious film school at Pune in the 60s, where he was to have a decisive influence on a whole generation of film-makers. If there is a Ghatak tradition in the work of Mani Kaul or Kumar Shahani, it is one in which his gropings and interrogations of the gaps between the regional and the general have been refined into a series of cultural and aesthetic postulates with which film-making becomes an art of meditation and interrogation.

The relationship between Ghatak and his students has not been a one-way street. Shahani has rightly made the point that it was through the adulation of the young that Ghatak and the world rediscovered his work. By the time he arrived at the film school he was washed up: his obsession with Bengal irritated; his drinking and temper were legendary.

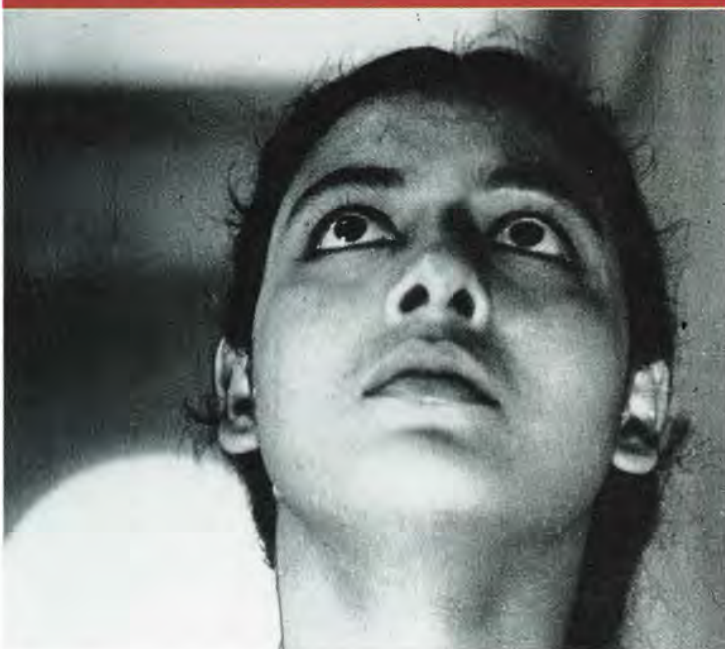
But what perhaps sealed Ghatak's fate was the increasing prominence and popularity of the other Bengali film-maker – Satyajit Ray. The tidy ways in which Ray dealt with matters regional; his 'clinically disinfected realism of poverty'; the absence of overtly political themes; and above all the conviction that an Indian director's task is to express his 'Indianness' all served to marginalise the hybrid figure Ghatak always was.

Sixteen years after his death, Ghatak's concerns are now international concerns. The questions his films raise about uncertain presences and borders in the modern world are now the stock-in-trade syntax of our new post-modern vocabulary.

Peter Wollen, author of 'Signs and Meaning in the Cinema'

When I first came across Ritwik Ghatak's films about ten years ago, I was puzzled. I was very impressed by them, but I did not

Ghatak's Tagore, the great modern writer of Bengal, is not a mystic or a romantic, but a rogue, a performing monkey, a user of four-letter words



Supriya Choudhury in 'Meghe Dhaka Tara', 1960

know how to approach them. It was only later that I discovered that Ghatak was not only a director, but also, in his own idiosyncratic way, a teacher and theorist. As I have read his writings, I have not only come to appreciate his films more, but I have also realised that his outlook on film-making is one which has begun to affect my own thinking.

There are three reasons why I think Ghatak's work is especially valuable. First, there is the mixture of the personal and the political. Ghatak was a committed Marxist who began his career working in a political theatre company. But his work is always marked by elements of his own life, culminating in his final film, *Jukti Takko Ar Gappo*, which is virtually a self-portrait, depicting his own problems with alcoholism. Ghatak wanted to combine insights from Marxism with elements from Indian thought, as well as the work of Jung, with which he became fascinated. All his political thinking is refracted in the films through personal dramas, which bear the stamp of his preoccupation with politics as about individual people rather than abstractions. "Film is basically a matter of personal statement. All arts are in the final analysis. And film seems to be an art".

Secondly, Ghatak always wanted

to combine the global with the local. He was quite at home talking about Eisenstein or Brecht, Shakespeare or Godard, but at the same time he was completely rooted in the specificity of Bengal, its history, literature and culture. This global vision allows him to see foreign artists through Indian eyes and vice versa. He reveres Tagore as the great modern writer of Bengal, but looks at him disrespectfully. His Tagore is not a mystic or a romantic, but a rogue, a performing monkey, a user of four-letter words.

When Ghatak made a film about the Partition of Bengal, about which he cared deeply, he was unsparingly honest, undeflected by nationalism in his vision of his nation. As he himself put it, talking about his film, *Subarnarekha*, "Refugee? Who is not a refugee?" Within moments he is talking about Brecht's *Three Penny Opera*, pointing out how Brecht invented an abstract London, not in order to escape from the reality of the city, but to create a generalised framework which could be relevant to audiences in many different places. So, Ghatak's Bengal is also an invented framework, a device, yet a device which, he hopes, will enable him to show more of the truth than simple realism could.

Finally, Ghatak tried to find a way between popular melodrama and the

avant-garde. He remained committed to a popular cinema, a cinema of the slums and the villages, and returned again and again to the ways in which melodrama is rooted in Indian popular culture. It should not be despised, despite Bombay talkies, any more than Mizoguchi despised the melodrama he took from the *Kabuki* theatre. Here too, Ghatak made use of Jung in looking for ways of introducing psychoanalytic concepts, 'unconscious' motifs and images in order to affect the audience at a deeper, less conscious level.

At the same time, Ghatak believed in the need for an 'experimental cinema'. He was interested in the work of Norman MacLaren, the Surrealists, Godard. He did not see any contradiction between these two approaches. On the contrary, he seemed to think that popular art and literature were themselves full of devices which experimentalists were trying to recapture, as if 'intellectual montage' or 'dream time' were implicit in folk fables and jokes. Experimentalism was both a quest for the new and a rediscovery.

Ghatak saw himself as trying with each film to find a new form to say something new – now picaresque, now documentary, now epic, now experimental, now melodrama. Each film has something to tell us, something from which we too can learn. "It is the nuances I am after, the elusive, fleeting nuances", he said.

Anup Singh, film-maker working out of Bombay

Indian cinema begins with Dadasaheb Phalke's *Raja Harishchandra*, made in 1913. A few years earlier he had chanced to see *The Life of Christ*, and from that moment, in his own words, he was "gripped by a strange spell".

"While the life of Christ was rolling fast before my eyes I was mentally visualising the gods Shri Krishna, Shri Ramachandra, their Gokul and Ayodhya... Could we, the sons of India, ever be able to see Indian images on the screen?"

Phalke borrowed money, sold his wife's jewellery and made his first film. The Phalke Films Company was now a studio in business. In 1918, he made *Shri Krishna Janam*, a film depicting the birth, miracles and pranks of the dark god as child. In 1919, he made *Kaliya Mardan*, a film based on the legend of the child-god overpowering the great serpent of time, Kaliya, who has been terrorising the river banks of Gokul.

The sons and daughters of India were now finally watching Indian images on the screen. Phalke had transformed the Hollywood Christ into the Indian calendar-art Krishna.

But Phalke left untouched,

unquestioned Hollywood's law that cinematic time/space is a frame – like destiny – which pre-exists that which is going to be set within it. This law demands that performance, camerawork, *mise en scène* and editing all work to establish the self-enclosed, seamless flow. All discontinuities are rationally denied. The Indian popular cinema accepted this flow just as unquestioningly as Phalke.

Indian popular cinema appropriates genres from indigenous popular theatre as well as from Hollywood. It mixes together the religious and family drama, the action thriller, the song and dance, the love story, and, of course, the mythological – continuing where Phalke left off. What holds this masala together is the melodrama of the protagonist's desire, circumscribed by destiny, which might take the form of society, politics, economics.

The only aspect of the film which is allowed a certain freedom from predetermination is the song. Traditionally in Indian popular film the song plays the function of the soliloquy or chorus. In both these cases, hidden desires are allowed a voice, the protagonist is sometimes allowed to be decentred by nature. The rhythm of the camera movement, editing and lighting is loosened from the exigencies of dramatic action and allowed a tone, a texture, an independence of gesture which would usually be curbed as excessive. It is this excess that Ritwik Ghatak began with, developed and improvised on further, creating a cinema, finally, that challenges the basis of classical Hollywood.

Unlike Hollywood, Ghatak does not take 'reality' for granted. The Partition of India had taught him the cost of unquestioning acceptance. He was convinced that the Partition was not historically destined but forced upon the people, both by the colonialists and the nationalist powerbrokers. The independence of the country had made millions into refugees.

Ghatak's cinema, then, is a cinema of questions: about reality, power, destiny, mythologies and other transcendental principles – identity, nation, race, class – that determine who and what can be thrown into silence, closure and exile. With his very first film, *Nagarik*, through *Meghe Dhaka Tara* to his final film, *Jukti Takko Ar Gappo*, all classical notions of the frame are put into question.

Ghatak often foregrounds nature in all its grandeur, untainted by the projections of the character or narrative. His time/space is never a continuum but constantly a flux that defamiliarises our experience and knowledge. This denial of hierarchy shatters the notion of character,

space, time and narrative as closed essential principles and allows us to study them in the particularity and palpability of their historical circumstances.

As a film-maker very much in Ritwik Ghatak's tradition, I believe there are two reasons that make him so fiery an influence on film-makers today. One, undoubtedly, is his immense ability to emphasise his cinema's embeddedness in its particular social context. The other is his capacity to show his cinema in the process of becoming.

Ghatak is the rare film-maker who opens himself to what comes into being in the unrestrained dialogue with the desire of the multiple elements of cinema. The desire of light and gaze; gesture and movement; rhythm and silence; word and texture. A foregrounding of a shift in the rhythm of a moving camera – a liquid movement suddenly jagged – can signal desire.

In Ghatak, the jagged rhythm denies the camera movement its classical, realist destiny of doggedly following the character or coming to rest on some narratively potent object. The shifting rhythm shakes the continuity and enters the discourse of time. The very same shot now allows the present to enter into history or into the future, the real to enter into the fabulous, into desire...

Derek Malcolm, film critic of 'The Guardian'

If a solid, logically developed body of work signals a great director, Ritwik Ghatak could hardly claim to be more than an exceptional talent capable of greatness but unable, ultimately, to grasp it. But it is certainly too easy to regard him romantically as a flawed genius who has come to mean something acutely personal to almost every Indian film-maker – a traditionalist and a radical in one, a teacher who refused the rulebook, a Bengali patriot who fought against the destruction of his culture by colonialism and Partition, a man who drank himself to death because of the pressures which bore in upon him.

This is the stuff of which myths are made and it is not too difficult to partake of the legend. But we should see him for what he was, not what we would like him to be. He didn't suddenly rise up to smite the complacent certainties of the Indian film scene. His art was rooted in his own culture, which included Tagore and the Bengali theatrical tradition. He became a film man because it seemed the best way of binding his thoughts about the destruction of his culture and his people.

This urgency, which is the true hallmark of his work – the feeling

that his whole culture was being corrupted – led him to the Indian People's Theatre Association and towards Marxism and the Communist party. He wrote plays, directed them, acted in them and went from village to village with them. When independence and Partition led to dissension and sectarianism, he found the cinema a better stage upon which to communicate.

His roots were in that part of Bengal which then became another land, and the experience of this terrible divorce infected his whole life, redoubling his sense of purpose and his feeling that not only Bengal, but also himself, were no longer whole. What we see in his work for the cinema is not just a polemicist with an amazing eye for detail, but a man who really believed that people matter and that society and the individual are indivisible.

Nowhere was this more apparent than in Ghatak's freely stated debt to Tagore, who was at the peak of his career during Ghatak's childhood and adolescence. Essentially, Tagore was more important to Ghatak than Marx, Brecht or even Eisenstein, the film-maker who influenced him most. But he viewed him totally differently, as "the performing monkey of Bengali literature" rather than the romantic and venerated classicist. For Ghatak, Tagore had already expressed almost everything he wanted to say and was as much of an angry rebel as himself. "From the lowest rung of society to the highest he spared none", he once said. "He was a mystic, agnostic, everything. Read the full range of the man's work."

The paradox that Ghatak found in Tagore was certainly there in himself. His films were often as uneven and contradictory as his own nature. They could be melodramatic, bitty and raw. It is important in praising him to understand his flaws, his struggle with himself and his ultimate urge towards self-destruction when he felt they had got the better of him. "It is the right and privilege of an artist to leap from the ridiculous to the sublime", he said, and that is what he and his films frequently did.

Perhaps his greatest work was *Meghe Dhaka Tara*. Here, within a story revolving round a refugee family, victims of Partition struggling for survival in the Calcutta of the late 50s, Ghatak was able to find the most perfect synthesis between style and content. The film was made in 1960 and he died in 1976. In its use of sound alone, it is a monument. Its importance, however, lies in the way Ghatak takes an epic theme and shakes it into an extraordinarily personal document, traditional and radical at the same time. It is still a shock to see it now.



What's up, Doc?

Theresa FitzGerald

That's All Folks!

The Art of Warner Bros Animation

Steve Schneider, Aurum Press, £19.95, 254pp

Tom and Jerry:

Fifty Years of Cat and Mouse

T. R. Adams, Pyramid, £14.99, 160pp

Cel Magic: Collecting Animation Art

R. Scott Edwards and Bob Stobener, Laughs Unlimited Inc, \$19.95, 103pp

The golden age of popular American animation – from roughly the mid-30s to the mid-50s – oscillated between the respectable and the less so. On one side there was the Disney mode – pastoral, folksy, child-oriented, upholding conventional morality and family values and tending increasingly towards a lavish modified realism. And on the other were the animators who came together at Warner Bros in the early 40s to create an anarchic, wisecracking, sophisticated world, subversive in its attitudes and lean and non-realistic in technique.

While for years Disney reigned supreme as the great US animator, more recent opinion, both critical and popular, has been swinging in favour of the free-fall imaginations of Tex Avery, Chuck Jones and Bob Clampett. Mickey Mouse may sell more products, but it's Bugs Bunny who's become the iconic figure. The sardonic rabbit exerts a streetwise appeal that evades the squeaky clean rodent.

In *That's All Folks! The Art of Warner Bros Animation*, Steve Schneider notes that audiences respond not only to Bugs' wit and sassiness, but to "his cavalier disregard for scruples and moral conventions. Glee, he gets away with doing things that society debars, glorifying in his unfettered freedom with a self-congratulatory 'Gee, ain't I a stinker?' Bugs acted out society's repressions – nowhere more so than in the almost incalculable number of times he went in drag". Along with this amorality went a matching contempt for the constraints of realism which, at its wildest, as

in Chuck Jones' *Duck Amuck*, could edge into nightmare.

This collective sensibility derived from low budgets and a desire to build on the origins of animation in the bizarre and surreal, reaching back through the Fleischer brothers (*Out of the Inkwell*, *Betty Boop*) and Otto Mesmer's *Felix the Cat* to the pioneering work of Georges Méliès. There was no talking down to the audience – sexual innuendo and ebullient technical experimentation were thrown into the mix. Schneider quotes the Warner storywriter, Michael Maltese: "We wrote cartoons for grownups, that was the secret".

Many books about animation (when they're not heavily technical, aimed mainly at would-be animators) tend to eschew the critical in favour of the historical, or even – as in the case of most books on Disney – the hagiographical, becoming extended PR jobs. There's often also a nervousness, a fear of treating a popular medium in depth, leading at its worst to the golly-gee-whizz approach of third-rate children's television.

Schneider avoids such traps – partly by assuming an intelligent readership and partly by giving us the context of his subject, showing why Warner cartoons are so distinctive and how the people there worked. So we follow the career of the Disney-trained Chuck Jones, seeing him learning to loosen up and catch the off-the-wall slant of his colleague, Tex Avery, before launching into his own idiosyncratic style. *That's All Folks!* is richly illustrated, making good use of original drawings which give a more dynamic sense of movement than single frames or cels.

Where Schneider succeeds in conveying enthusiasm without gushing, T. R. Adams all too often slides feet-first into the mush. *Tom and Jerry: Fifty Years of Cat and Mouse* celebrates "the talents of Hanna, Barbera and their staff of animators, who, like ancient alchemists changing lead into gold, wrought life from ink, paint and paper". If you can stomach the tone of unstinting praise, generously studded

with quotes from Hanna and Barbera themselves recalling how good their stuff was, the book packs in a good deal of useful information – not least a complete filmography of every *T&J* release from 1940 to 1967. It's also valuable in detailing the work that goes into making a cartoon, explaining just what an animation director does and the crucial role of music and sound effects in the finished film.

Since the entire *Tom and Jerry* cycle works variants on a single basic situation, the appeal of the films depends on characterisation and ingeniously detailed set-ups. When MGM, for whom the cartoons had always been made, abruptly shut down the unit in 1957, Hanna and Barbera found themselves forced into the drastically cut-price world of television, where five minutes of animation were budgeted at \$3,000 (as against some \$55,000 at Metro). Their response was 'limited animation' – minimum movement, zero body language, just animate jaw, hands or legs as necessary – as seen in *Yogi Bear*, *The Flintstones* and all their descendants on mid-afternoon TV. Economics ruled, and with even Disney going minimalist, full animation retreated into the art houses. The golden age was over.

Television, which had done so much to kill off popular-market full animation, also kept it posthumously alive, endlessly rerunning classic cartoons for new generations. But nostalgia for the great days of animation has recently given rise to some bizarre phenomena – quite apart from the booming business of linked product merchandising, which is nothing new. Well before Mickey Mouse was even thought of, Felix fans could buy stuffed replicas of their hero, and Adams devotes one chapter to cataloguing a vast range of *Tom and Jerry* spin-offs – everything from balloons and bubble baths to bedroom furniture and credit cards.

But over the past few years, the raw material of animation itself has been sucked into the cash nexus. 'Animation art' – the cels and artwork used in the production of cartoons – has become big business, with single cels going for \$50,000 and upwards. Given such prices, it's maybe not surprising that *Cel Magic: Collecting Animation Art*, billed as "an ideal introductory guide" to the field, is written in a style of barely suppressed hysteria. "Collecting animation art", burble Edwards and Stobener, "Is exciting... and FUN!" Prices "have escalated beyond the wildest dreams of art collectors and investors alike". You can almost hear the cash register chinging as twin dollar signs flash up on the authors' eyeballs.

The films themselves are relegated to secondary interest, with their creators ticked off as careless philistines, wantonly junking so much potential loot. "In the eye of the animation industry, the cel was a means to an end", Edwards and Stobener note in pained reproach. Studios even washed their nitrate cels for re-use, causing "millions of dollars of wonderful artwork to literally go down the drain".

Cel Magic ends with a series of unashamed plugs for various galleries deal-



Hanna and Barbera moved from the ingeniously detailed sophistication of *Tom and Jerry*, top left, to the diminished minimalism of TV's cut-price *Fred Flintstone*, far right. At Warner Bros, the anarchic subversion of *Betty Boop*, above, and *Bugs Bunny*, right, acted out society's repressions



ing in animation art, seemingly written by the outlets themselves. Although the book deals exclusively with the US, the process of fetishisation is well under way here. A branch of Name That Toon Gallery opened in London last June. Welcome, as Edwards and Stobener say, to "the wonderful world of animation art collecting!"

Naming names

Julian Graffy

Time Within Time: The Diaries

Andrey Tarkovsky, translated by Kitty Hunter-Blair, Seagull Books, £25, 392pp

"I saw a very bad film by Buñuel... *Tristana*... It's unbelievably vulgar". "Saw Bertolucci's *La luna*. Monstrous, cheap, vulgar rubbish". "Saw... films by Jancsó: *Hungarian Rhapsody* and *Allegro Barbaro*... Tasteless, pretentious and portentous; inferior and vulgar".

Andrey Tarkovsky is nothing if not forthright, and in the course of *Time Within Time*, films by Michelangelo Antonioni, Federico Fellini, Francesco Rosi, Marco Bellocchio, Yasujiro Ozu, François Truffaut, Roman Polanski, John Cassavetes, Otar Ioseliani, Peter Weir and Andrzej Zulawski are also found wanting.

Of living directors, only Robert Bresson and Sergei Paradzhanov are praised as men of genius ("Where have all the great ones gone? Where are Rossellini, Cocteau, Renoir, Vigo?"), though even Bresson later damages *Nostalgia's* chances at Cannes by insisting that he will be satisfied only with the Golden Palm for *L'Argent*. There are actors and actresses, on the other hand, whom Tarkovsky consistently admires, including Jill Clayburgh, Fanny Ardant and Jean-Louis Trintignant, all of whom he hoped to cast in his films.

The central focus of *Time Within Time*, diary entries made at irregular intervals between 1970 and Tarkovsky's death in December 1986, is not his views on other artists, however, but personal concerns. He worries about the health of his second wife, Larissa, and his beloved younger son, Andrey, and later suffers anguish over the years it takes to get Andrey permission to join his parents in the West. He struggles to build up their country house in Miasnoe. He gives innumerable lectures in an attempt to pay off his debts. At the end he battles against and then accepts illness and imminent death.

Above all, the diaries provide a fundamental source for all the films from *Andrei Rublev* onwards, and in particular for *Solaris*, *Mirror (Zerkalo)* and *Stalker*. Here, Tarkovsky chronicles the exhausting, demeaning skirmishes over setting them up, the struggle to preserve them in the form in which he wants them, and, finally, the problems in getting them shown, either in the USSR or at international festivals. The pettiness and mendacity of cinema and other bureaucrats, especially the egregious Filipp Ermash, who tormented Tarkovsky for years (and who, ►

◀ ironically, was retired from the chairmanship of the State Cinema Committee the day before Tarkovsky died) reduce him to uncomprehending despair.

The book contains a list of official complaint suggestions about *Solaris*, including "Cut out God", "Cut out Christianity" and "There should be a written introduction... explaining it all". The text is punctuated by phrases like "I might as well give up..." "I don't exist. I'm an empty space..." "It's time to give up cinema. I have grown up". Yet against this background Tarkovsky somehow finds the energy to make plans to film Thomas Mann, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Samuel Beckett's *Molloy*, Tolstoy, Mikhail Bulgakov and Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*.

Time Within Time is studded with praise of and quotations from Tarkovsky's favourite writers: Dostoevsky, Montaigne, Thoreau, Hermann Hesse ("He and I have so much in common"), Ivan Bunin and Fridrikh Gorenshstein. There is also evidence of his serious concern with his own spiritual development – prayers, passages from the Holy Fathers, references to meditation. Statements against which to measure the films frequently occur: "I can't bear seeing people express their feelings, even sincere ones..." "What is a woman's driving force? – submission, humiliation in the name of love..." "I am categorically against entertainment in cinema".

The diaries have so far scarcely been published in Russian, but where comparison is possible, the translation is accurate. It is therefore particularly regrettable that the usefulness of what is potentially a major research source is substantially lessened by editorial amateurism. It would seem axiomatic that this book should have an index. The fragmentary nature of the entries demands a chronology or proper notes to fill in the gaps. All *Time Within Time* does have is an eight-page 'Notes on Names and Titles Occurring in the Diaries', which would be more accurately entitled 'Unreliable Notes on About Half the Names...', and which ceases completely in 1982.

Worst of all, both text and notes are riddled with mistakes. Among the names regularly misspelt are those of Tarkovsky's first wife, Irma Raush (here called Irina); the Russian directors Ali Khamrayev, Roman Balayan and Eldar and Georgy Shengelaya; Jill Clayburgh, Luchino Visconti, Andrzej Wajda and Fellini. Read *Time Within Time* for Tarkovsky's thoughts and experiences, for his passion and rigour, but check the names elsewhere.

East is still East

George Brandt

A History of Japanese Television Drama: Modern Japan and the Japanese Masunori Sata and Hideo Hirahara (eds), The Japan Association of Broadcasting Art, (price unavailable), 231pp

For the Japanese, as in the West, drama looms larger on television than on the cin-



Anatoly Solonitsyn as *The Writer in 'Stalker'*, providing a mirror for Tarkovsky's own martyrdom at the hands of cinema bureaucrats

ema screen. Viewers in their millions get their early morning fix from fifteen-minute instalments of telenovels put out by NHK, the Japanese equivalent of the BBC. Scripts of quality programmes by authors like Taichi Yamada and So Kuramoto are published in hard covers and have extensive sales. A three-hour drama about the life of Admiral Yamamoto broadcast in 1977 achieved a viewer rating as high as 32.2 per cent in the Kansai region around Osaka.

If, as Tony Rayns argues (*Sight and Sound*, May 1991), we know little of current Japanese cinema, we know even less about Japanese television drama, past or present. Yet this cultural ignorance is far from mutual. The formative guidelines for the early post-war Japanese teleplay were Western, specifically Reginald Rose and Paddy Chayefsky. When transmitted in Japan, the Italian serial about the life of Leonardo da Vinci stimulated a number of similar biographical epics. Later American influences have ranged from *I Love Lucy* to *Roots* and *Holocaust*.

As this book, written by five Japanese TV scholars, points out, there are similarities in the broadcasting set-ups of Britain and Japan. In Japan, too, there is the quality network NHK on the one hand and commercial stations on the other (sixty-seven of the latter dedicated to TV only and thirty-six broadcasting in both TV and radio). And there are also analogies in terms of the various popular genres.

Domestic plays, which rejoice in the Anglicised name of *homu dorama* (home drama) and mirror the evolution of post-war Japanese society, occupy considerable programme time. Wartime problems gave way to those connected with the drive for economic success; the place of women in Japanese society, moving from subservience to increasing independence, has been reflected; an affirmative tone has changed to a more critical one; and since

the coming of ENG, a more documentary note has crept in.

But domestic drama is only one aspect of Japanese programming. History plays take up a great deal of programme time. (The story of the forty-seven loyal retainers, immortalised on the *kabuki* stage and frequently made into films, has figured more than once on the small screen.) Swashbuckling costume pieces – *chambara* – abound. Even crime fiction often comes in period guise.

Would any of this appeal to British viewers? The post-war history of Japan, to which the book explicitly links the evolution of TV drama, has of course been the reverse of Britain's: rising, not declining. Meanwhile, the West has opened its mind to the East to a minimal extent, and the cultural heritage remains stubbornly different. This book, published by the Japan Broadcasting Association, a group of writers, scholars and TV practitioners dedicated to maintaining quality in TV drama, gives the clearest available overview of the history of Japanese TV drama. It is to be hoped that it will eventually be distributed in Britain, as the next best thing to first-hand acquaintance.

Scream again

Leon Hunt

Broken Mirrors/Broken Minds: The Dark Dreams of Dario Argento Maitland McDonagh, Sun Tavern Fields, £15, 293pp

Maitland McDonagh's *Broken Mirrors/Broken Minds* is the first book-length study in English of Dario Argento and of Italian horror in general. Most of the recent theoretical work on horror has been reluctant or unable to come to terms with these films' sado-masochistic pleasures. *Opera's* central metaphor for spectatorship, for

example, is a woman tied and gagged, with needles sellotaped under her eyes to stop her from closing them – a position from which she is forced to watch two spectacularly nasty murders. The old anti-horror line returns with a vengeance in the face of films like *Opera* and *Tenebrae* – how can anyone enjoy movies like these? McDonagh may only partly answer the question, but one is left in little doubt about her own pleasure.

McDonagh has one foot in early 70s film theory, the other in the world of fanzines such as *Fangoria*, *Gorezone* and the excellent *Cinefantastique*, which, she rightly acknowledges, have done all the work on Argento. Despite a conventional structure – chronological analyses of Argento's eleven films bracketed by an introductory discussion and an interview – she juggles this 'low' and 'legitimate' expertise deftly. But this mixed agenda also compromises her a little: it's hard to tell who the book is for, since few academics have shown interest in the films and the 'gore' fans may well be put off by excursions into Roland Barthes' *S/Z*, Tzvetan Todorov and Stephen Heath.

Despite methodological limitations, however, the book is very enjoyable and offers marvellous insights into individual films. *Profondo rosso* (*Deep Red*) and *Tenebrae* receive particularly impressive treatments and occupy privileged positions. Both are examples of the *giallo* – violent Italian murder mysteries influenced by American hardboiled writers like Cornell Woolrich and Fredric Brown (reprinted in Italy in yellow/*giallo* covers). These films can be approached through the existing critical industries of the detective story, Alfred Hitchcock, Fritz Lang and film noir, while also exhibiting anti-narrative excess. The two films which jettison classical narrative (along with logic, order and sense) almost completely – *Suspiria* and *Inferno* –

Woman in a new light: a 1941 studio portrait of actress Ida Lupino, who went on to become a film director with her own independent company in the 50s

are relegated to minor status in McDonagh's account by virtue of being *too* different. It could be argued, however, that it is when Argento stops making sense that his mixture of trash and art cinema becomes most fascinating, and also less tied to the relentless Oedipality of the *giallo*.

More problematic, though, is the way McDonagh's auteurist approach evades political analysis. One would never guess from the bulk of this book that these films, which are limit cases of the genre, rest predominantly on submitting beautiful women to violent slaughter (*Tenebrae*, for example, has its actresses made up to look as similar as possible, giving the sense of the same woman being killed over and over again). McDonagh, however, is decidedly inscrutable on the subject, either ignoring it or integrating it into an authorial 'vision'. This complacency is not helped by the use of illustrations with captions like "Maria (Lara Wendell) pays the price of loose living in *Tenebrae*".

For all that, *Broken Mirrors/Broken Minds* is a useful excursion into relatively uncharted territory; for now, at least, McDonagh's book is something like definitive.

Women's work

Lizzie Francke

Reel Women: Pioneers of the Cinema 1896 to the Present

Ally Acker, Batsford, £22.50, 374pp

American film-maker and writer Ally Acker tells a cautionary tale of how she tried to raise money for a TV version of her book. An off-the-record comment from the Corporation of Public Broadcasting proved illuminating: "The closest this administration is getting to funding women's issues is quilts in women's lives". Tongue-in-cheek, perhaps, but it speaks volumes about the querulous relationship that women have with the film and TV industries. It's difficult to keep a sense of humour when the question of opportunities for women is becoming increasingly serious. Acker's book is a salutary reminder of the impressive and often obscured contributions women have already made to cinema.

Acker has compiled a biographical dictionary of her subjects, who are arranged under various headings – directors, screenwriters, editors, women of colour, stunt women, foreign film-makers (the book takes a very US perspective) and more. It's a powerful roster and *Reel Women* fires the canon sky high in a bid to rewrite conventional histories.

While familiar names such as Dorothy Arzner, Mary Pickford and Ida Lupino are represented, Acker also culls from the past a host of less celebrated women, from Lois Weber, who during the silent period was one of the few directors to tackle difficult and often taboo social issues, to Natalie Kalmus, who together with her husband developed the process of Technicolor. Acker also includes the extraordinary

Helen Keller, who produced and starred in her own film in 1919. Contemporary women range from Sherry Lansing, whose meteoric rise from five-dollar-an-hour scriptreader to producer of megabuck movies like *Fatal Attraction* and *The Accused* set her shoulder pad to shoulder with the male moguls, to Ruby Oliver, who last year threw in the towel with her day-care business to become the first black woman to direct, write and produce with her own savings a 35mm feature, *Love Your Mother*.

While Acker admits that her project is not exhaustive and that she looks forward to reading, not writing, Volume 2, there are some surprising omissions (as well as a sprinkling of unfortunate typos). But the history of women behind the camera should fill many different books, with no single one bearing the burden of proof.

This is a timely revision as we approach the hundredth anniversary of cinema. Georges Méliès may be renowned as one of the founding fathers of narrative film, but Acker cites Alice Guy Blaché's prior contributions. In 1895 Blaché was working as a secretary for the Gaumont organisation in Paris. There she had access to a prototype of the movie camera and sought Gaumont's permission to film a couple of short plays. He apparently consented, saying "It's a child's toy anyhow".

As Blaché later noted: "If the developments which evolved from the proposal could have been foreseen, then I probably never would have obtained his agreement. My youth, my lack of experience, my sex all conspired against me". However, one of the earliest narrative film-makers died without the honour of a single obituary, knowing that of the hundred or so films she directed, only a few survived.

Last laugh of the Medusa

Patrice Petro

The Gorgon's Gaze: German Cinema, Expressionism, and the Image of Horror
Paul Coates, Cambridge University Press, £30, 287pp

The Gorgon's Gaze is a wide-ranging and eclectic study of German cinema and the legacy of film expressionism and horror. Moving between Weimar cinema and New German cinema, and between Hollywood and the European art film, Paul Coates explores issues of gender, premonitions of the Holocaust, and representations of Nazism in films spanning a range of national traditions.

In lieu of a strong central argument, Coates prefaces his study with a strident critique of developments within film studies. Film studies, he claims, "once promised to become an open forum for reflection upon the separate arts and cultural domains". Now, however, "once-exciting theories have been deprived of their speculative status and frozen into an orthodoxy that needs to be challenged".

Coates' attack recalls a similar one launched by David Bordwell in his ►



◀ recent book *Making Meaning*. But where Bordwell takes on post-structuralism and continental theory (what he calls "SLAB theory" in reference to the work of Sausure, Lacan, Althusser and Barthes), Coates, who claims himself to be working within these traditions, challenges what he deems a far more dangerous orthodoxy – one which "speaks of difference and excludes anything that differs". Hence the book's title, which aims to evoke a series of shifting, ambiguous meanings surrounding the power of the look, inexorably returns to the image of the Medusa, the monster-woman-turned-feminist, whose look – or better yet, whose theory of the look in cinema – arrests the analysis of the postfeminist male critic.

In his discussion of Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, Coates criticises Laura Mulvey for failing to recognise Scottie as the superior candidate for our feelings of pathos. Challenging Tania Modleski's more recent interpretation of the film (which he nevertheless draws heavily upon), Coates questions what he believes to be an inherently sexist theory of the male spectator in feminist film theory.

Later in the book, and with reference to my own work on Weimar cinema, Coates criticises what he calls the "belief that is somewhat too prevalent in feminist scholarship", namely, "that every female spectator is all woman, and every male one all man". Insisting on the unsexed or "ambisexual" nature of spectatorship, Coates advances a considerably less persuasive theory of the film viewer than those that he dismisses, or than others (Kaja Silverman, Teresa de Lauretis, Mary Ann Doane) that he ignores. In a gesture characteristic of so much postfeminist criticism, Coates, it would seem, wants desperately to be a female spectator too.

In this and other ways, *The Gorgon's Gaze* demonstrates a remarkable obliviousness to the wealth of work in feminist film studies over the past fifteen years. In a book concerned to challenge what it assumes to be received or 'orthodox' opinion, this is a serious failing. The result is a terrible simplification of the state of the debate, and a rather naive attempt to defeat a 'monstrous feminism' by turning the mirror of postfeminism against it.

Here is the news

Andrew Billen

Now the News: The Story of Broadcast Journalism

Edward Bliss Jnr, Columbia University Press, \$40.50, 575pp

How far can you trust a book written like an American newscast? Edward Bliss Jnr was Walter Cronkite's news editor during the glory days of CBS News. It was he who handed Cronkite the Associated Press wire messages from which, voice breaking, Cronkite told the US that Jack Kennedy was dead. In his loving, detailed history of television and radio news in America,



Bliss often writes as if he were still delivering lines to the master.

Now the News presents the history of broadcast journalism – from the first recitation of election returns in 1916 to the creation of CNN and beyond – as a long fight to extend the scope of the First Amendment to the airwaves. During the Second World War, the authorities attempted to censor correspondents such as Cecil Brown. Twenty-five years later, Vice President Spiro Agnew took on "the tiny and closed fraternity of privileged men" in television news "who determined what America saw". Not until the late 70s were cameras and microphones allowed into Congress, and the Supreme Court, after years of stonewalling by Chief Justice Warren Berger, remains out of bounds.

Bliss is particularly eloquent on the continuing fight over the 1934 Communications Act's so-called Fairness Doctrine, which demands equal time for opposing views. Broadcasters, he says with his usual deft *précis*, applaud these goals, but claim the right enjoyed by newspapers to cover the news as they see fit.

In fact, without doing so explicitly, the book makes a good case against the doctrine of impartiality that has dogged American as much as British broadcasters. See *It Now's* exposé of Senator McCarthy's methods, Fred Friendly and Ed Murrow's *Harvest of Shame* documentary on the abuse of migrant workers, Cronkite's 1968 commentary foreseeing stalemate in Vietnam (after which Lyndon Johnson concluded that if Cronkite thought the war was unwinnable, so must most of America) are all examples of correspondents aiming at truths beyond balance. To dwindle into anchor-speak, each made a difference.

The book ends on a dying fall, with mass sackings as the three networks, each under new owners, face unprecedented competition from cable and local television. Having broken McCarthy, seen off Agnew and achieved a zenith of technological competence, the nightly news programmes seem now to be destined to turn themselves into glitzy magazines or else to die victims of the nation's shrinking attention span.

To return to the credibility question: trust Bliss only as you would Dan Rather. *Now the News* is, as no doubt his own bulletins were, clear, vivid, responsible and enlivened by word bites from some of the century's most gifted journalists. But, like *CBS Evening News*, there are few fathoms in its analysis.

The power of the newscaster: Walter Cronkite's comments about the likely outcome of the Vietnam war were seen by Lyndon Johnson as a barometer of US public opinion

Shorts

Diary of a Young Soul Rebel

Isaac Julien and Colin MacCabe, BFI Publishing, £10.95, 256pp

● Inside stories from the director and the executive producer of *Young Soul Rebels* about the trials and tribulations of getting the film made. The book also includes a lively discussion between US writer bell hooks and Isaac Julien on black film-making, and the script by Paul Hallam, Derrick Saldaan McClintock and Isaac Julien.

Hollywood at Home:

A Family Album 1950-1965

Photographs by Sid Avery, text by Richard Schickel, Robert Hale, £16.95, 144pp

● *Saturday Evening Post* photographer Sid Avery's intimate pictures of movie celebrities during the last days of the studio era are set in their historical context by *Time* magazine critic Schickel. Beautifully produced, 'candid' shots of the stars caught in apparently unguarded moments give an illusion of spontaneity which often seems poignant in retrospect – particularly in the case of Rock Hudson.

Enterprise and Heritage:

Crosscurrents of National Culture

John Corner and Sylvia Harvey (eds), Routledge, £12.99, 271pp

● A timely investigation of the tangled relationship between tradition and innovation in British national culture during the Thatcher years. The anthology ranges widely from the burgeoning heritage industry to images of big business in 80s Hollywood and issues of national identity and ethnicity.

Feature Films on a Low Budget

John Randall, Focal Press, £14.95, 136pp

● A guide to making independent, low-budget feature films from screenplay through to distribution. The book includes a pertinent chapter on financing, with details of how to plan and lay out budgets and accounts, and others on directing, sound and music, and editing. Randall's four 'keys to success' are: a good script; a well-conceived breakdown and shooting schedule; a good director; and a professional crew.

Film and the Working Class:

The Feature Film in British and American Society

Peter Stead, Routledge, £10.99, 283pp

● Paperback edition of Stead's 1989 examination of the representation in US and British movies of the working class from the silent era to the 80s. Diverse films covered span *Intolerance*, *Modern Times*, *Salt of the Earth*, *Blind Date*, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *The Molly Maguires* and *Breaking Away*.

Find the Director and Other

Hitchcock Games

Thomas M. Leitch, University of Georgia Press, \$15, 296pp

● Developing a ludic theory of narrative, Leitch argues that Hitchcock's work can be defined as a complex series of games with the rules of film-making, drawing viewers in by both manipulating and surprising them. According to Leitch, Hitchcock's audiences are knowing participants in these machinations, and derive considerable pleasure from them, as well as from the challenges they offer.

Growth in the spring

In 1980 I bought the first television set I had owned in years and my first videocassette player, a Betamax, the hot machine at that time in the US. I live in a small university town and there is not usually a lot of cash around for such luxuries. I had just received a large advance for my first novel, however, and was feeling flush. So I moved this fine new apparatus into my bedroom and invited my friends over for an evening of popcorn and movies. We set the machines up facing my little cherry four-poster bed, propped ourselves up on pillows, stuck the first videocassette I had ever rented into the slot and pushed PLAY. The movie was *Being There*, Peter Sellers' last, and, I think, most wonderful film.

The credits rolled. Light was coming in the windows of a well-appointed bedroom with a four-poster bed. There were plants watching. The only sound was deep, peaceful breathing. Was it peaceful? Or was it a premonition of the death going on elsewhere in the cinematic house? A premonition perhaps of Sellers' death, so soon to come? Or of our own, which we so blithely choose to forget.

Sellers is asleep in the bed. He is wearing beautifully tailored yellow silk pyjamas. The pyjamas are buttoned to the neck. This is a civilised man asleep in a civilised bed. This is western civilisation as I knew it as a child. The breathing continues. Jerzy Kosinski's name comes on the screen. He wrote the book from which the film was made and also wrote the screenplay. It is only much later, after I have seen the movie many times, that I will realise how amazing Sellers' gift was. He was able to take Kosinski's dark vision and turn it into great and humane comedy. Divine comedy. This is the work of genius. He had done it years before in *Dr Strangelove* and now he was doing it again.

The breathing is interrupted by a click. A timer has turned on the television set facing Sellers' bed. Music fills the room. The screen within the screen is filled with the cello section of a symphony orchestra. They are playing the first movement of Schubert's Eighth Symphony. Their hands pluck the strings. Their arms move the bows. Sellers wakes, blinks his eyes, watches peacefully as he comes to consciousness. He sits up on the bed, clicks his jaw several times in time to the music. Then he gets up, turns on a light, goes to a dresser, takes out a brush and begins to brush his hair before a mirror. The white-haired conductor raises his baton, violins join the cellos, the conductor's head sways. Sellers puts the brush back into the drawer, picks up an African violet from the top of the television and carries it to a table by a window. The music rises. Sellers takes a second plant from the table and transfers it to the top of the television.

In my bedroom in Fayetteville, Arkansas I am transfixed. A new world is opening before me. This is how it will be. I will

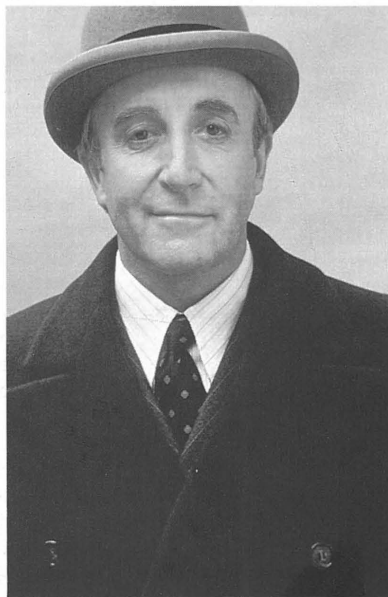
A perfect world is glimpsed in 'Being There', says American novelist Ellen Gilchrist as she hymns the glory of Peter Sellers

sit in my own bedroom eating popcorn and great art will come to me. Unadulterated pleasure. In my own bedroom I can be enchanted and entertained by the best the world has to offer. Even when I am alone this bounty will be available to me. I have misjudged, underestimated and misprized technology. I have refused to see the possibilities.

The movie continues. Never once does the pace falter or the perfection wane. My friends and I eat all the popcorn and make some more. When the movie is over, we watch it again. We are in heaven, wallowing in art. We believe that we will see movies this good forever. This is what great art does, doesn't it? Makes us believe that the world has turned a corner, that truth and beauty are there for the taking. Like love, art says, the bad part is over, it's Easy Street from now on.

The storyline is simple. Chance, the Gardener – the Peter Sellers role – is a mildly retarded, grown man who has spent his entire life inside a mansion in a decaying section of Washington, DC. He is perhaps the illegitimate son of the old tycoon who dies off-screen during the night preceding the action. Chance has lived his entire life inside the house and known only two people, the old man and a black servant named Louise. When the old man dies, Louise leaves and a lawyer named Thomas appears and tells Chance they are closing the house. Obedient and orderly, Chance packs a suitcase and walks out of the door into modern-day Washington, DC. Armed only with his remote control device and a fund of knowledge garnered from watching television and tending a garden, he walks out into streets filled with drug gangs, hurrying people and automobiles. "I've never been in an automobile", he has told Thomas. "I've never been allowed outside of the house".

A freak accident delivers Chance into



The luminous Sellers in 'Being There', 1979

the hands of Eve, played by Shirley MacLaine, the young wife of a dying Washington kingmaker named Ben. He is taken to live temporarily in their compound while his injury heals. In this stately world, where even the servants speak in hushed voices, Chance's quiet manners, learned from Mr Roberts and Captain Kangaroo (the hosts of two popular US children's programmes) seem right at home.

He begins to talk to Eve and Ben and Ben's attending physicians, mouthing platitudes learned from television and his garden. "There will be growth in the spring". "The young plants do much better if you help them". "I'm sorry you're so sick, Ben". Every word is absolutely true and the worldweary people he encounters are entranced by his silences and small shy speeches. This is the honest man they have dreamed of knowing, the truth they have longed to hear. They believe what he says because he believes it. They read into his speeches whatever they need to hear. His audience grows to include the President of the United States and, finally, a national television audience. "Do you realise more people will be watching you tonight than all those who have seen theatre plays in the last forty years?" an assistant producer at the television studio tells him.

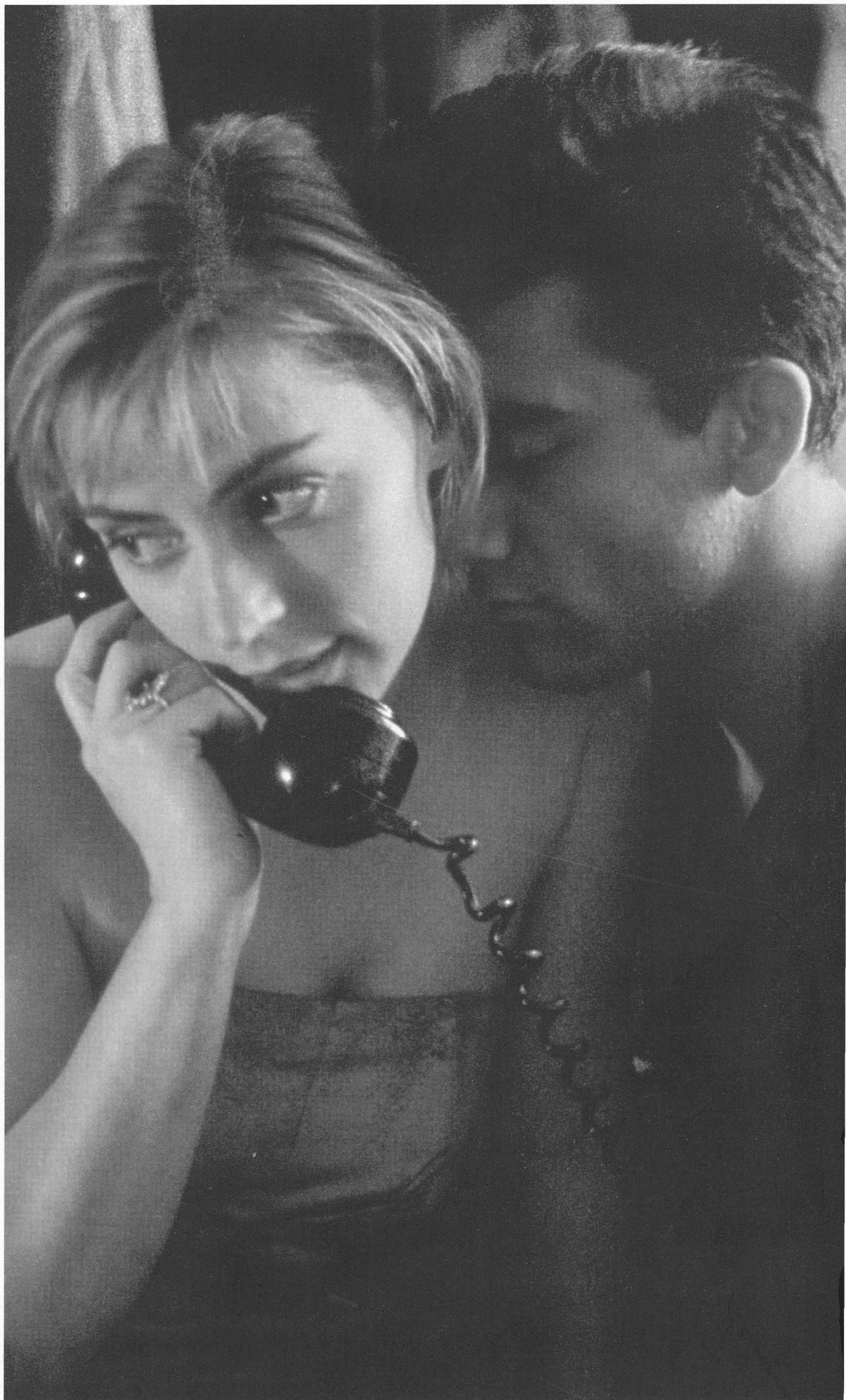
The movie treats of darker themes: of corruption in high places, the bartered sexuality of May-September marriages, the terrible loneliness of those in power, who must depend on their underlings for love. It delineates the relationship between blacks and whites in the US as brilliantly as any film in my memory. But these remain minor patterns. The glory of the movie is in Sellers' hands and in the character of Chance the Gardener. The honesty and innocence of the man are "Krylovian", as the Russian ambassador notes, having warmed himself at Chance's side during a reception to which Chance escorts Eve. "So you know your Krylov in Russian, do you, Mr Gardener? I must confess I had suspected as much all along".

This is a perfect movie. The scenes unfold with unerring logic, but here again the logic may only be another manifestation of Sellers' genius. The character he creates is an unforgettable creature of great courtesy and tact. It is, I believe, his greatest role.

I am forever paying this movie the tribute one pays to great art. I think about lines from it and they inform my life and help me when I am in need of wisdom. "There will be growth in the spring", I tell myself, and giggle like a child. "First comes spring and summer, then fall and winter, then spring and summer again". "I'm glad you didn't open, Eve". "I like to watch". "I'm hungry. Could you give me something to eat?" God love artists, my daughter-in-law once wrote to me on a postcard from a Picasso exhibition in New York City. They make it right.

Reviews

Reviews, synopses
and full credits for all
the month's new
films and new British
television films



Close My Eyes

Certificate
18
Distributor
Artificial Eye
Production Company
Beambright
For Film Four
International
Producer
Thérèse Pickard
Production Supervisor
Alison Barnett
Production Co-ordinator
Diane Chittell
Location Manager
Angus More Gordon
Casting
Joyce Gallie
Assistant Directors
Ray Corbett
Andrew Wood
Richard Whelan
Screenplay
Stephen Poliakoff
Director of Photography
Witold Stok
In colour
Camera Operator
Pete Cavaciuti
Editor
Michael Parkinson
Production Designer
Luciana Arrighi
Art Director
John Ralph
Set Decorator
Robyn Hamilton-Doney
Music
Michael Gibbs
Music Performed by
The Raphael Ensemble
Music Producer
Andy Park
Costume Design
Amy Roberts
Wardrobe
Cynthia Dowling
Make-up
Chief:
Sula Loizu
Anna Copley
Title Design
Chris Allies
Titles/Opticals
The Peerless Camera Company
Sound Editor
Peter Joly
Sound Recordist
Peter Edwards
Dolby stereo
Consultant:
Ray Gillon
Sound Re-recordist
Hugh Strain
Stunt Co-ordinator
Wayne Michaels
Stunts
Tracey Eddon
Steve Dent

Cast
Alan Rickman
Sinclair Bryant
Clive Owen
Richard Gillespie
Saskia Reeves
Natalie Gillespie
Karl Johnson
Colin
Lesley Sharp
Jessica
Kate Gartside
Paula
Karen Knight
Philippa
Niall Buggy
Geal
Campbell Morrison
Scotsman
Annie Hayes
Receptionist
Maxwell Hutcheon
Interviewee
Geraldine
Somerville
Natalie's Boss
Helen Fitzgerald
Scottish Girl
Christopher Barr
Noley
Gordon Salkild
Hotel Porter
Choy Ling Man
Maid
John Albasiny
Young Man
Marie Passarelli
Selina
Jan Winters
Doreen

9,758 feet
108 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Director: Stephen Poliakoff

London. Brother and sister Richard and Natalie Gillespie have been brought up separately and see each other only occasionally. After a series of tedious jobs, Natalie is working for an employment agency when she marries wealthy entrepreneur Sinclair Bryant and moves with him to a large riverside house in the Home Counties. Richard, who has had no lack of girlfriends, has meanwhile given up his well-paid planning job to work for an agency monitoring the burgeoning new development in London's Docklands.

Invited to lunch with Natalie and Sinclair at the start of a long, hot summer, Richard finds his sister changed into an attractive and sophisticated woman. Their natural affection for each other begins to develop a stronger undercurrent, which spills over into love-making when Natalie visits Richard at his flat. Disturbed by the implications, Natalie insists that their love-making is an isolated aberration, but during an idyllic country picnic Richard pleads with her to meet him just once more. Telling Sinclair that she has to visit a client in the Midlands, Natalie spends a weekend with Richard in London. When he fails to contact Natalie, Sinclair begins to suspect that she is having an affair.

Despite her love for him, Natalie is now determined to keep the increasingly insistent Richard at a distance. She tells him to find a girlfriend, and resists his advances when they next meet. Calling at the riverside house, Richard is alarmed when Sinclair insists on taking him upriver on a hired boat. He fends off Sinclair's questions about Natalie's 'affair'. In despair when Natalie tells him that she and Sinclair are moving to the United States, Richard makes a fumbled attempt to kill himself after another fraught meeting with Natalie.

At Natalie and Sinclair's farewell garden party, Richard's frustration snaps into violence as he accuses Natalie of using him. But with Sinclair's revelation that he knows about their affair – and with the news that he and Natalie are not after all going abroad – Richard appears to accept that his obsessive love for his sister has come to an end.

Incest is the nominal theme of *Close My Eyes*, but as often in Stephen Poliakoff's work the particular subject is only the inner circle of a spiral of metaphors. Poliakoff's second film as a director is also about London at the end of the 80s, a surreal, post-modernist urban landscape whose glowering façades

reduce its human figures to mere reflections in glass. In one of the long, hot summers that characterised the last years of that dehumanised decade, the glittering prizes are beginning to tarnish. The tension in the superheated air is no longer the frisson of unthinking success.

In this atmosphere, the incestuous sibling relationship that forms the film's narrative centre may be seen as double-edged: as a perverse celebration of the toppling of a last taboo, but also as a swansong for the unchecked licence of the age. Vaguely troubled by the facility of money – Richard (Clive Owen) changes his job from instigator to monitor of the planning that is making an alien landscape of London's Docklands, Natalie (Saskia Reeves) is uneasy with the ostentation of her entrepreneur husband's Thames-side mansion – brother and sister find obsessive solace in a forbidden love.

There is no hint of prurience in the film's view of this incestuous affair. Poliakoff charts its doomed progress with a narrative poise and a visual confidence that belies his relative inexperience as a director. In this, he is splendidly abetted by the luxuriant production design by Luciana Arrighi. London gleams in this ardent summer light (and few films have so suggestively conveyed the unfamiliarity of familiar settings), but there is an air of menace behind the glowing façades. Docklands is a wasteland of half-empty buildings, obscenely parading their icons of see-through lifts and monumental brass ashtrays. The interiors, of offices and flats, are darkly lit, as though hiding from the glare outside just as Richard and Natalie are forced to hide their secretive love behind closed doors.

Outside, even in the country, the golden summer light offers a false promise. "It was like being inside a colour supplement", Richard says of his first visit to his sister's riverside home. The idyll of a day-long picnic is underscored by an unspoken, tangential tension as the first, barely perceived signs are revealed that the natural affection of brother and sister is about to cross the boundaries of allowable convention.

In the changing sexual climate of the late 80s (Richard's boss is dying of AIDS), the high summer of self-indulgence is about to give way to autumnal reflection. The film closes with the end of the affair, as in a long shot of not so elliptical comment Natalie walks into the autumn evening with her husband (Alan Rickman, in what is perhaps the best of three persuasively edgy central performances), and Richard uncertainly follows a short distance behind them.

David Wilson

Tarnished prizes:
Saskia Reeves,
Clive Owen in
'Close My Eyes'



Things natural: Campbell Scott, Julia Roberts

Certificate
15
Distributor
20th Century Fox
Production Companies
20th Century Fox
A Fogwood Films production
Producers
Sally Field
Kevin McCormick
Co-producer
Duncan Henderson
Associate Producer
Mauri Gayton
Production Supervisor
Todd Arnow
Production Co-ordinator
Michelle Wright
Unit Production Manager
Duncan Henderson
Location Manager
Michael John Meehan
Post-production Co-ordinator
Darren Waters
Casting
Mary Goldberg
Associates:
Amy Lippens
James Adams
Voice:
Barbara Harris
Local:
Nancy Hayes
Extras:
The Casting Group
Assistant Directors
Stephen Dunn
Carla Corwin
Screenplay
Richard Friedenberg
Based on the novel by
Marti Leimbach
Director of Photography
Juan Ruiz Anchia
Colour
DeLuxe
Additional Photography/Camera Operator
Martin Schaer
Visual Effects Supervisor
Peter Donen
Editors
Robert Brown
Jim Prior
Additional:
David Blewitt
Art Directors
Guy J. Comtois
Richard Johnson
Art Department Co-ordinator
Tana Bishop
Set Design
R. Gilbert Clayton
Set Decorator
Crocket Rowland
Illustrator
Chris Buchinsky

Special Effects Co-ordinator
Richard Ratliff
Special Effects Foreman
Wayne Rose
Special Effects
Neil Smith
Pat Lee
Music
James Newton
Howard
Music Director
Marty Paich
Orchestrations
Brad Dechter
Music Editors
Jim Weidman
Ellen Segal
Costume Design
Susan Becker
Costume Supervisor
Rosemarie Fall
Costumers
Kirsten Everberg
Wingate Jones
Make-up Artists
Richard Arrington
Tom Lucas
Title Design
Pacific Title
Supervising Sound Editors
Rick Franklin
Co-editor:
Paul Timothy Carden
Sound Editors
Barbara Barnaby
Noah Blough
Simon Coke
Albert Gasser
David Stone
Bernard Weiser
Chris Welch
Supervising ADR Editor
James Beshears
ADR Editor
Alan Nineberg
Sound Recordists
David MacMillan
Bob Renga
Music:
Michael Mason
Joel Moss
ADR Recordists
Charlene Richards
Brad Brock
Foley Recordist
Gary A. Hecker
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Sergio Reyes
Dick Overton
Chris David
Foley Artists
Catherine Rowe
Joseph T. Sabella
Technical Advisers
John Fink
Pat O'Connor
Karen Ochoa
Richard E. Crass
Visual Consultant
Neil Spisak
Production Assistants
Scott Harris
Derek Johansen

Bruce Moessen
Darren Pearce
Kristin Cagan
Shane Kerwin
Kat Miller
Scott Rosencrans
Ellen Smith
Eileen Turner
Stunt Co-ordinator
Bill Erickson
Stunts
J. Suzanne Rampe
Pat Romano
Solly Marks
Stand-ins
Julia Roberts:
Gina Bravos
Campbell Scott:
Jim Lamb
Animal Trainer
Karyn Smith
Helicopter Pilot
Craig Hosking

Cast
Julia Roberts
Hilary O'Neil
Campbell Scott
Victor Geddes
Vincent D'Onofrio
Gordon
Colleen Dewhurst
Estelle Whittier
David Selby
Richard Geddes
Ellen Burstyn
Mrs O'Neil
Dion Anderson
Cappy
George Martin
Malachi
A.J. Johnson
Shauna
Daniel Beer
Danny
Behrooz Afrakhan
Moamar
Michael Halton
Gordon's Friend
Larry Nash
Assistant
Alex Trebek
Host of *Jeopardy*
Richard Friedenberg
Duncan Henderson
Bettina Rose
Jeopardy Contestants
Fran Lucci
Annabel
John M. Rosenberg
Bandleader
Patrick Cage
Shauna's Boyfriend
Tim Bohn
Guest
Holly Del Rosso
Trevor Fant
Kevin O'Connor
Lauren Oymainan
Erin Valley
Children in Hospital
Howard Morris
Voice on *Jetsons*

10,012 feet
111 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Joel Schumacher

Hilary O'Neil, a young woman living in a run-down suburb of San Francisco, has just left her unfaithful boyfriend and is looking for a new direction. She answers an advertisement asking for the services of a live-in carer, and is summoned to an interview at a mansion in the plush part of town. She discovers that the patient is twenty-eight-year-old Victor Geddes, who has leukaemia; initially turned away by Geddes' millionaire father because she has no nursing experience, Hilary is hired by the son.

She moves into his basement flat and accompanies him to the hospital where he is receiving chemotherapy. A friendship gradually develops between the two. Then one day Victor announces that the chemotherapy sessions have ended and persuades Hilary to drive him to Mendocino, a small town on the North Californian coast, for a short holiday so that he can complete his PhD thesis on Gustav Klimt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The vacation turns into a long-term stay as the two settle in and make friends with the locals, including Gordon, a young handyman, and Estelle Whittier, an eccentric rich widow. Victor decides that he is completely well and terminates his contract with Hilary.

The two subsequently become lovers, but Victor secretly injects himself with morphine when he begins to feel ill again. After a disastrous Christmas Eve dinner with Gordon, Hilary confronts Victor with the used syringes she has found, and implores him to return to the hospital. The two argue and Hilary walks out. She rings Victor's father and asks him to help his son. He arrives the next day, and Victor promises to return with him after Estelle Whittier's Christmas party. At the party, Victor and Hilary say farewell, though Hilary later returns because she believes Victor is preparing to run away and die rather than accept the hope of life offered by the treatment. She pledges her love through health, sickness and death, and Victor consequently agrees to go back to the hospital.

Where David Cronenberg's *The Fly* played *Love Story* as a rabid romance, Joel Schumacher's *Dying Young* re-sanitises the formula of love and loss, bathing it in a golden glow of chaste emotion. By the time the final credits roll over Klimt's painting of "The Fulfilled", the troubling issues of disease and grief – particularly resonant in an AIDS-obsessed culture – have been smoothed out to make way for a wholesomely redemptive conclusion.

With such a thin plot,

Schumacher characteristically pays most attention to the overworked schematics of the art direction. The early scenes of Victor in post-chemotherapy convulsions are shot with a feverish camera following him around the clinical setting of his matte black-and-chrome subterranean apartment. It is a gloomy and cold masculine environment; by contrast, the house in Mendocino is full of sunshine and healthily cluttered with all things feminine and 'natural' as Hilary makes her radiant presence felt.

As the hired help, Julia Roberts finds herself cast as another pretty woman (though this time one who is bought for a lowly \$400 a week), to become the demure and nurturing angel of a loveless house. And once again she is a character for a man to have and to mould: "I see interest in things", muses Victor of his captive pupil as he introduces her to the sophisticated delights of Klimt, Rossetti, Arthur Rubinstein playing Mozart and arrugulo salad. From a working-class background, Hilary is a woman who can just 'be' – vacantly waiting to be bestowed with meaning.

The high-cultured but incapacitated patrician hero is allowed to project on to her his fantasies of what he would like her to represent – literally, as he gives her an art-history slide show of his favourite paintings by Klimt and Rossetti featuring their red-headed muses. Schumacher liberally uses this leitmotif to re-emphasise the connection between Roberts and the necro-romantic artists' models. Such allusions transform her into a *memento mori*, while conversely she is also the life-support system – the perfect Victorian woman-angel. The endless fetishising of Julia Roberts, however, serves only to elevate the conspicuously consumptive Victor's dying into a fine art. As in *Flatliners*, the art-history references and overburdened romantic style are just so much icing on the pulp.

Lizzie Francke



Perfect woman (Julia Roberts)

Certificate

18

Distributor
UIP

Production Company
40 Acres and a Mule
Filmworks

For Universal

Producer

Spike Lee

Co-producer

Monty Ross

Line Producer

Jon Kilik

Production

Supervisor

Preston Holmes

Production

Co-ordinators

Office:

Debra D. Jeffreys

40 Acres:

Susan D. Fowler

Unit/Location

Manager

Brent Owens

Post-production

Office co-ordinator

Johanne Brown

Casting

Robi Reed

Associate:

Carl Anthony Lee

Extras:

Tracy Vilar

Andrea Reed

Assistant Directors

Randy Fletcher

H. H. Cooper

Dale Pierce

Screenplay

Spike Lee

Director of

Photography

Ernest Dickerson

Colour

Duart

Prints by DeLuxe

Camera Operators

Phil Oetiker

Additional:

George Pattison

Frank Prinzi

Steadicam Operators

Larry McConkey

Ted Churchill

Kirk Gardner

Video Operators

David Zimmern

Nancy Meshkoff

Editor

Sam Pollard

Additional:

Brunilda Torres

Production Designer

Wynn Thomas

Set Decorator

Ted Glass

Set Dressers

Peter Von Bartheld

Bill Butler

Nancy Boytos

Jerry Kadar

Keith Wall

Laura West

Scenic Artist

Jeffrey L. Glave

Storyboard Artist

Jeff Balsmeyer

Sculptures

Sara D'Alessandro

Music

Stevie Wonder

Score:

Terence Blanchard

Music Producer

Steve Van Arden

Music Performed by

The Boys Choir of

Harlem and Orchestra

Music Arrangements

Stevie Wonder

Vocal:

Stevie Wonder

Nathan Watts

Keith John

Kimberly Brewer

Music Editor

Alex Steyermark

Songs

"Bless This House"

by May H. Brahe, Helen

Taylor; "The Upper

Room" by Bobby Smith,

Mahalia Jackson; "Let

the Church Roll On"

by James Cleveland,

"He Calmed the Ocean"

performed by Mahalia

Jackson; "Can't Do

Nuthin' for Ya Man"

by William Drayton,

Keith Shocklee, Eric

Sadler, performed

by Public Enemy;

"Once Upon a Time"

by Charles Strouse, Lee

Adams, "It Was a Very

Good Year" by Ervin

Drake, "Hello, Young

Lovers" by Richard

Rodgers, Oscar

Hammerstein II,

performed by Frank

Sinatra; "The

Seductress" by and

performed by Wynton

Marsalis; "Behold the

Star" (traditional)

performed by the Boys

Choir of Harlem;

"Livin' for the City";

"Jungle Fever"; "Fun

Day"; "Gotta Have You";

"Chemical Love"; "I Go

Sailing"; "Each Other's

Throats"; "Make Sure

You're Sure"; "Lighting

Up the Candles";

"These Three Words";

"Queen in the Black";

"Feeding off the Love

of the Land" by and

performed by Stevie

Wonder; "If She Breaks

Your Heart" by Stevie

Wonder, performed by

Kimberly Brewer

Costume Design

Ruth E. Carter

Wardrobe Supervisor

Jennifer Bryan

Make-up

Laini Thompson

Ellie Winslow

Bernadette Mazur

Title Design

Balsmeyer & Everett

Sound Design

Skip Lievsay

Music:

Vaughn Halyard

Dialogue Editors

Kevin Lee

Frederic Rosenberg

Jeffrey Stern

Magdaline Volaitis

ADR Editors

Deborah Wallach

Pam Demetruis

Diane Schaub

Foley Editors

Bruce Pross

Frank Kern

Steven Visscher

Sound Recordist

Russell Williams

Music:

Steve Van Arden

Delfeayo Marsalis

Patrick Smith

ADR Recordist

David Boulton

Dolby stereo

Consultants:

Robert S. Warren

Bradford L. Hohle

Sound Re-recordist

Tom Fleischman

Music:

James Nichols

Sound Effects Editor

Ron Bochar

Foley Artist

Marko A. Costanzo

Consultant Architects

Jack Travis

Aia Asid

Production

Assistants

Office:

Dana White

40 Acres:

Wanda Brooks

Lyle Dickey

Set:

Michael Ellis

Lee Davis

Van Hayden

Nshaveni Wa Luruli

Doug G. Watson

Shawn Sweeney

Charles Mahorney

Casting:

Winsome Sinclair

Locations:

Kristen M. Johnson

Stunt Co-ordinator

Jeff Ward

Animal Trainers

Dawn Animal Agency

Cast

Wesley Snipes

Flipper Purify

Annabella Sciorra

Angie Tucci

Spike Lee

Cyrus

Ossie Davis

The Good Reverend

Doctor Purify

Ruby Dee

Lucinda Purify

Samuel L. Jackson

Gator Purify

Lonette McKee

Drew

John Turturro

Paulie Carbone

Frank Vincent

Mike Tucci

Anthony Quinn

Lou Carbone

Tyra Ferrell

Orin Goode

Halle Berry

Vivian

Veronica Webb

Vera

Veronica Timbers

Ming

David Dundaara

Charlie Tucci

Michael Imperioli

James Tucci

Nicholas Turturro

Vinny

Steven Randazzo

Sonny

Joe D'Onofrio

Patty

Michael Badalucco

Frankie Botz

Anthony Nocerrino

Veshaay

Debi Mazar

Denise

Gina Mastrogiacom

Louise

Tim Robbins

Jerry

Brad Dourif

Leslie

Phyllis Yvonne

Stickney

Nilda

Theresa Randle

Inez

Pamala Tyson

Angela

Rick Aiello

Officer Long

Miguel Sandoval

Officer Ponte

Charles Q. Murphy

Living Large

Talese Harris

Iris

Averell Curtie

Young Panhandler

Melvin Bethea

Ewart Lauder

Drug Dealers

Randolph May

Man in Crack Den

El-Shah Muhammad

Gentleman in

Wheelchair

Suzanna White

Church Lady



Cultural roots...

Certificate

18

Distributor

Blue Dolphin

Production

Companies

Sugarloaf/Gotan
In association with
Towa Production
Company (Tokyo)/
Praesens-Film
(Zurich)/Grupo Baires
(Buenos Aires)

Executive Producers

US:
Henry W. Holmes Jr
Jane Holzer
Argentina:
Gustavo Caraballo
Fernando Gelbard

Producer

David Weisman

Co-producers

Milena Canonero
Michael Maiello
Associate Producers
James W.
Skotchdopole
Tony Payne

Production Manager

Luis Fernandez
Location Manager
Carlos Salvo

Casting

David Rubin
Additional:
Laura Kennedy
Patty Hannock

Assistant Directors

Fernando Bassi
Marcelo Rembado
Harry Jarvis
Martin Sosa

Screenplay

Leonard Schrader
Inspired by the work
of Manuel Puig

Director of

Photography

Juan Ruiz-Anchia
Colour
DeLuxe

Editors

Debra McDermott
Additional:
Lee Percy

Production Designer

Anthony Pratt
Art Director
Tom Sanders

Set Decorator

Graciela "Coca"
Oderigo

Special Effects

Duran Duran
of Mexico

Music

Thomas Newman
Tango Music
Performed by
Raul Garelo
Roberto Pancera

Music Editor

Bill Bernstein

Songs

"La Cumparsita",
"Giron Porteno",
"Region Campera",
"Cucando Lloro la
Milonga",
"Guapeando", "Cordon
de Oro", "El Tamango",
"Arrabal Amargo",
"Sognando"

Choreographers

Carlos Rivarola
Additional:
Graciela Daniele

Costume Design

Patricio Bisso
Wardrobe
Beatriz Di Benedetto

Make-up Artists

Mirta Blanco
Joel Martial
Anne-Marie
Barthelemy

Make-up Effects

Michelle Burke
Title Design
David Weisman
Neal Thompson

Titles/Opticals

Cinema Research
Corporation
Supervising Sound
Editor

Susan Dudeck
Sound Editors
Marilyn McCoppen
Ed Callahan
Diana Peligrini
Gloria Dalessandro
Simon Coke

Supervising

ADR Editor
Val Kuklowsky
Sound Recordists
José Luis Diaz
Music:

John Vigran
Dolby stereo
Supervising Sound
Re-recordist

Mark Berger
Sound Effects
Larry Oatfield

Foley
Joan Rowe
Jerry Trent

Argentina

Consultant
Dodi Scheuer
Production
Assistants

Inés Vera
Mercedes Guevara
Daniel Gomez Yiche
Inés Yujnovsky
Beat Hellstern
Martin Caraballo
Steve Hansen

Film Extract
Four Horsemen of the
Apocalypse (1921)

Cast

Vincent D'Onofrio
Cholo
Mathilda May
Alba/Stephanie

Esai Morales
Zico Borenstein
Fernando Rey
Judge Torres
Cipe Lincovski
Mama

Josh Mostel
Bertoni
Constance McCashin
Flora

Patricio Bisso
Gaston
Ruben Szuchmacher
Small Italian Thug

Marcos Woinski
Big Italian Thug
Sergio Lerer
Fake Rabbi

Javier Portales
Police Chief
Jean-Pierre
Regueraz

Jewish Gang Boss
Vando Villamil
Nestor Zacco
Policemen

Tony Payne
Waiter
Henry Holmes
Passenger

Anthony Pratt
Ship Captain
Dodi Scheuer
Immigration Officer

Inés Yujnovsky
Bébé
Harry Havello
Doctor

Kerry Warn
Department Store
Clerk
Anne Henry
Maid

Bill James
Butler
Armando Capo
Guard

Hector Arbelo
Claudio Garafolo
Santis Maggi
Cholo's Musicians

8,325 feet
92 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Leonard Schrader

1924. Aboard a luxury liner heading for Buenos Aires, nineteen-year-old Stephanie is tiring of her possessive older husband Judge Torres. After witnessing a young woman throwing herself off the ship, Stephanie assumes the suicide's identity and, as Alba, disembarks at Buenos Aires, where she is to marry Zico, an Argentinian Jew. Zico buys her a diamond ring, but on her wedding night tells her she must pay for it by satisfying the jeweller Bertoni. Stephanie kills Bertoni, and the body is disposed of with the aid of Zico's gangster acquaintance Cholo. Stephanie is taken to Zico's cabaret-cum-brothel, from which she makes an unsuccessful escape attempt.

She falls in love with Cholo, but he remains aloof, claiming to love only the tango. Cholo saves Stephanie from an abduction attempt planned with Zico's complicity, but when the police intervene she escapes. Stephanie is discovered in hospital by Judge Torres, who takes her back; Cholo visits her, posing as her tango teacher, and is arrested but escapes. Stephanie goes in search of him, pursued by her husband and by Zico. At the brothel, Cholo kills Zico, but is himself shot by Torres and dies in Stephanie/Alba's arms.

The credits of *Naked Tango* claim that it was inspired by the Argentinian novelist Manuel Puig, who apparently encouraged producer David Weisman to make a tango film. Weisman and Leonard Schrader both worked directly with

Puig material, as producer and writer respectively, on Hector Babenco's adaptation of *Kiss of the Spider Woman*; but there the atmosphere of hothouse romance was refracted through the ironic lens of pastiche. *Naked Tango* maintains an arch knowingness towards the Valentino films it pastiches, but otherwise seems to have succumbed to the myth of tango.

To some degree, the film attempts to respect tango's cultural roots – its origins in brothel society, and its fundamentally sexual nature as "a stylisation of sadomasochism", as Albert Goldman has put it. The attraction between Stephanie and Cholo, which expresses itself primarily through dance, rather than love-making (although it should be said that there's precious little here to attract dance fans), has to some extent been treated psychologically. But the film's insights are diluted by flat characterisation and its over-emphasis on Anthony Pratt's luridly baroque settings. To all intents and purposes, tango here is about nothing more than heaving breasts and razor-sharp side-whiskers.

Vincent D'Onofrio's Cholo, Bronx accent and all, is characterised by a psychotic sneer, a slouch hat, and a gleaming white pair of spats – a *Face* fashion-spread composite of a Buenos Aires pimp. May is set up as an embodiment of simmering sensuality, but a sullen pout and a Louise Brooks bob do not make a 20s sex goddess. Schrader attempts to extrapolate on the sort of perverse sexuality, as well as visual style, associated with Erich von Stroheim's films, along with the icons of Brooks and Valentino. But despite the occasional knowing reference to 20s cinema ("You look worse than Lillian Gish in *Broken Blossoms*", Stephanie's camp hairdresser tells her), the film conveys less a sense of ironic allusion than of dogged homage.

Most alarming, however, is its unreconstructed anti-Semitism. Alba's charming bridegroom and his mother turn out to be heartless exploiters; the jeweller is a caricatured slobbering beast; the Jewish wedding ceremony is revealed as a cynical sham; and the Buenos Aires merchant community even demands from Zico what amounts to a pound of flesh. Against this background of duplicity and sweaty, 'unhealthy' sexuality, the 'superior' squeaky-clean dalliance of Stephanie and Cholo takes on disturbing connotations. The blithe anachronisms – "Attagirl!", "Get the fuck out of my office, you faggot!" – and the fact that the streets of Buenos Aires are plastered with posters for *Blood and Sand* – in English – only compound the ineptitude.

Jonathan Romney



... and bobs
(Mathilda May)

Certificate

18

Distributor

Warner Bros

Production Company

Warner Bros

Producers

Doug McHenry

George Jackson

Co-producer

Preston L. Holmes

Associate Producers

Fab 5 Freddy

Suzanne Broderick

James Bigwood

Dwight Williams

Production Associate

Kimberly Allen

Production Supervisor

Brent Owens

Production Office Co-ordinator

Lillian Pyles

Unit Production Manager

Preston L. Holmes

Location Manager

Parnes Cartwright

Co-ordinator:

R.W. Dixon

2nd Unit Director

Jeff Lengyel

Casting

Pat Golden

John McCabe

LA:

Eileen Knight

Monica Swann

Assistant Directors

Dwight Williams

Joseph Ray

Marlene Arvan

2nd Unit:

Ed Dessiso

Additional:

Mark Croll

Ronnie Mitchell

Screenplay

Thomas Lee Wright

Barry Michael Cooper

Story

Thomas Lee Wright

Director of Photography

Francis Kenny

Colour

Technicolor

2nd Unit Photography

Jacek Laskus

Underwater Photography

Tom Grunke

Camera Operators

John C. Newby

Additional:

Ed Hersberger

2nd Unit:

John Sosenko

Steadicam Operator

Ted Churchill

Video Playback

Thomas Zafian

Editors

Steven Kemper

Additional:

Kevin Stitt

Production Designer

Charles C. Bennett

Art Directors

Barbra Matis

Laura Brock

Art Department Co-ordinator

Roberta Holinka

Set Decorator

Elaine O'Donnell

Key Set Dresser

Bruce Lee Gross

Scenic Artist

Jeff Glave

Special Effects Supervisor

Steve Kirshoff

Co-ordinator:

Wilfred Caban

Music

Michel Colombier

Music Supervisors

George Jackson

Doug McHenry

Supervising Music Editor

Carl Zittner



Lightly modish

Music Editor

Lise Richardson

Songs

"New Jack Hustler

(Nino's Theme)"

by and performed

by Ice T; "New Jack

City" by Teddy Riley,

Aaron Hall, Bernard

Belle, performed by

Guy; "(There You Go)

Telling Me No Again"

by Keith Sweat, Bobby

Wooten, performed

by Keith Sweat; "I'm

Still Waiting" by

H. Randall Davis,

performed by Johnny

Gill; "I'm Dreamin'"

by Stanley Brown,

performed by

Christopher Williams;

"For the Love Of

Money" by Kenny

Gamble, Leon Huff,

Anthony Jackson,

"Living for the City"

by Stevie Wonder,

performed by Troop

and Levert; "I Wanna

Sex You Up" by

Dr Freeze, performed

by Color Me Badd; "In

the Dust" by M. Ross,

C. Wong Wong,

R. Terry, M. McCray,

L. Campbell,

performed by 2 Live

Crew; "Get It Together

(Black Is a Force)"

by Amery Ware,

Joseph Brim,

Al B. Sure!, performed

by F.S. Effect; "Lyrics

2 the Rhythm"

by T. Marie, T.

Armstrong, R. Smith,

T. Hutchinson,

performed by

Grandmaster Flash;

"Facts of Life"

by D. Madden,

C. McIntosh, T. Jacobs,

K. Nicholas,

performed by Danny

Madden; "The Show"

by Douglas Davis,

Ricky Walters,

performed by Doug

E. Fresh and the Get

Fresh Crew; "The

Redhead One" by

Redhead Kingpin,

performed by

Redhead Kingpin and

the FBI; "Straight

Outta Compton"

by M.C. Ren, Ice Cube,

Eazy-E, Dr Dre,

performed by N.W.A.

Costume Design

Bernard Johnson

Wardrobe Supervisors

Barbara J. Hause

Jane E. Myers

Make-up Artist

Diane Hammond

Title Design

Douy Swofford

Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

Supervising Sound Editors

Mike Le-Mare

Robert G. Henderson

Alan R. Murray

Sound Editors

Karola Storr

Robert Fitzgerald

Robert Sephton

Bub Asman

Jayne Parker

Sound Recordist

Franklin D. Stettner

ADR Recordist

Robert Deschaine

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Patrick Cyconne

Dan Wallin

Robert Thirlwell

Foley

Terry Burke

Technical Consultants

Philip Schnelwar

Barry Ford

Office Production Assistant

Dawn Riley

Stunt Co-ordinator

Jerry Hewitt

Stunts

George Aguilar

Danny Aiello III

Bill Anagnos

David Lamont Batiste

Paul Bucossi

Darrell Carey

Danny Dod

Norman Douglass

Andy Duppin

Roy Farfel

Lance William Guecia

Don Hewitt

David Lomax

Jalil Lynch

Harry Madsen

Don Picard

Elliot Santiago

Bruce Smolanoff

Brian Strickland

Jeff Ward

Helicopter Pilot

Al Cerullo

Film Extracts

Scarface (1983)

Sweet Sweetback's

Baaddasssss Song (1971)

Cast

Wesley Snipes

Nino Brown

Ice T

Scotty Appleton

Allen Payne

Gee Money

Chris Rock

Pookie

Mario Van Peebles

Stone

Michael Michele

Selina

Bill Nunn

Duh Duh Duh Man

Russell Wong

Park

Bill Cobbs

Old Man

Christopher Williams

Kareem Akbar

Judd Nelson

Nick Peretti

Vanessa Williams

Keisha

Tracy Camilla Johns

Uniqua

Anthony DeSando

Frankie Needles

Nick Ashford

Reverend Oates

Phyllis Yvonne

Stickney

Prosecuting Attorney

Hawkins

Thalmus Rasulala

Police Commissioner

John Aprea

Don Armeteo

Fab 5 Freddy

Master of Ceremonies

Flavor Flav

DJ

Clerbert Ford

Frazier

Laverne Hart

Prom Queen

Eek-a-Mouse

Fat Smitty

Gregg Smrz

Biff

Erica McFarquhar

Teacher

Keith Sweat

Singer at Wedding

Max Rabinowitz

Gigantor

Marcella Lowery

Woman in Hallway

Manuel E. Santiago

Judge

Ben Gotlieb

Prosecuting Attorney

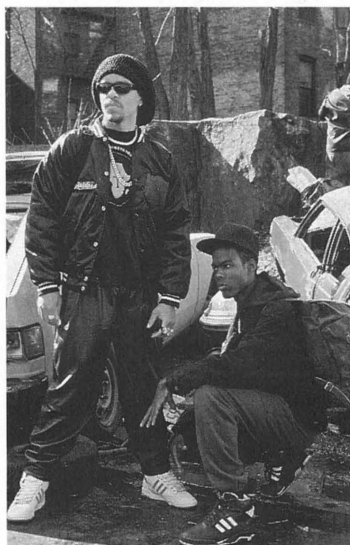
Thelma Louise

◀ soundtrack and a new generation of music-to-movies icons (Ice T, who surprisingly comes off best among a more experienced cast) replacing Isaac Hayes and co.

In many ways, the film is unfortunate to arrive in Britain after Abel Ferrara's similar but immeasurably darker and more dynamic *King of New York*. Ferrara acutely dissected the surface glamour of the druglord's life style by counterpointing images of conspicuous consumption with madness and self-destructive violence. But Mario Van Peebles falls back on 30s strategies of ploddingly intercutting the bad guys having a good time with scenes of the cops making speeches about how bad crack is for the community. Wesley Snipes, changing sides from his cop role in *King of New York*, is a self-conscious movie gangster, watching Brian De Palma's *Scarface* and floating in his swimming-pool while verbally invoking the shades of James Cagney and George Raft.

As in the 30s Warners movies, we follow his rise from petty hood-dom to gang czar, taking in his rejection of the fraternal CMB as he acquires the flashy accoutrements of the millionaire life style. Following the ancient dictate that the gangster must wind up dead in the gutter, the film even dares to cap its credible plea-bargaining punchline with a gratuitous assassination, carried out by a stereotypical decent old black man who has been hanging around ineffectually throughout the film. Needlessly confused in its plotting (much is made of some computer files Nick has to steal from Nino's safe during the wedding, but they are never mentioned again), typically exploitative in its use of gang molls, *New Jack City* may have some of the superficial flavour of its times, but is largely redundant as a genre exercise or as a "just say no" drugs-message movie.

Kim Newman



Music to movies (Ice T)

Only the Lonely

Certificate 15
Distributor 20th Century Fox
Production Company Hughes Entertainment
 For 20th Century Fox
Executive Producer Tarquin Gotch
Producers John Hughes
 Hunt Lowry
Co-producer Mark Radcliffe
Production Co-ordinator Lark Bernini
Production Manager Richard Prince
Location Manager Jacolyn Baker
Post-production Supervisor Ron Payne
Post-production Co-ordinator Frank Salvino
Casting Jane Jenkins
 Janet Hirshenson
Extras: Holzer Roche
Assistant Directors Mark Radcliffe
 Geoff Hansen
 Aimee Kohn
2nd Unit: Dennis White
 Jacolyn Baker
 Kevin Howe
 John Roman
Screenplay Chris Columbus
Director of Photography Julio Macat
Colour DeLuxe
2nd Unit Photography Bobby Byrne
 Paul Vombrack
 John Connor
Camera Operators A: Dennis Smith
 B: Pernell Tyus
Video Playback Steve Bradarich
Opticals Pacific Title
Special: Kevin Ordine
Editors Raja Gosnell
Film: Peter Teschner
Associate Editor Tim Silano
Production Designer John Muto
Art Director Dan Webster
Set Design Bill Arnold
 Gary Baugh
 Karen Fletcher-Trujillo
Set Decorator Rosemary Brandenburg
Set Dressers Cyril Matthys
 Juan Vela
 Thomas Gagnon
 Timothy Tiedje
Special Effects Supervisor Jerry D. Williams
Special Effects Special Effects Unlimited
Foreman: Charles Stewart
Hollywood: Lou Carlucci
 Bill Harrison
 Jeffrey Knott
Chicago: Sam Barkan
 Guy Clayton
 Bruce Strong
 Bob Lucas
Music/Music Director Maurice Jarre

Supervising Music Editor Dan Carlin Snr
Music Editor Tom Lavin
Songs "Only the Lonely" by Roy Orbison, Joe Melson, performed by Roy Orbison; "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" by Jack Norworth, Albert Von Tilzer; "My Wild Irish Rose" by Chauncey Olcott; "Ain't That a Kick in the Head" by Sammy Cahn, James Van Heusen, performed by Dean Martin; "Someone Like You" by and performed by Van Morrison; "Marie's Wedding" by Van Morrison, Paddy Moloney, performed by Van Morrison and the Chieftains; "I've Got Dreams to Remember" by Otis Redding, Zelma Redding, Joe Rock, performed by Etta James; "Umbriago" by Jimmy Durante, Irving Caesar; "Sorrento" performed by Mario Lanza
Choreographer Monica Devereux
Ballet Performed by Boitsov Classical Ballet Company
Choreography: Madame Elizabeth Boitsov
Costume Design Mary E. Vogt
Costume Supervisors Jennifer Jobst
 Mark Peterson
Costumers John Candy; Silvio Scarano
General: Gina Panno
Make-up Artists Craig Lyman
 Rodger Jacobs
Title Design Wayne Fitzgerald
Supervising Sound Editors Michael D. Wilhoit
 Wylie Stateman
Sound Editors Dino Dimuro
 Glenn T. Morgan
 Scott Martin Gershin
 Dave McMoyler
 Christopher Assells
Dialogue: Linda Whittlesey
 Neal Burger
 Raoul Stuart Copley
Supervising ADR Editor Gregg Baxter
ADR Editors Joe Dorn
 Avram Gold
Foley Editors Kelly Oxford
 Ascher Yates
 Richard Dwan Jnr
Sound Recordists Jim Alexander
 Tim Webb
 Chris Connelly
Music: Shawn Murphy
 Dolby stereo
Foley Recordist David W. Alstadter
Sound Re-recordists Chris Carpenter
 Rick Hart
 Kevin Carpenter
Foley Artists Christopher Moriana
 Robin Harlin
 Sarah Monat

Production Assistants Office: Chris Meisel
 Justin Greenberg
 Patty Willett
Set: Gary Goldman
 Bob Saunders
 Seth Vamos
Set Decorating: Kari Nowell
Camera: Peter Lund
Stunt Co-ordinator Freddie Hice
Stunts Troy James Brown
 Danny Costa
 Tim A. Davison
 Richard L. Duran
 Richard Ellis
 Bob Elmore
 Freddie Hice
 Maryann Kelman
 Stacy Logan
 Rick LeFevour
 Mario Roberts
 Cris Thomas-Palomino
 Kay Whipple
 Allan Wyatt Jnr

Cast
John Candy Danny Muldoon
Maureen O'Hara Rose Muldoon
Ally Sheedy Theresa Luna
Kevin Dunn Patrick Muldoon
Milo O'Shea Doyle Ryan
Bert Remsen Spats Shannon
Anthony Quinn Nick Acropolis
James Belushi Sal Buonarte
Joe V. Greco Johnny Luna
Marvin J. McIntyre Father Strapovic
Macaulay Culkin Billy
Allen Hamilton O'Neal
Teri McEvoy Susan
Bernie Landis Larry
Clarke Devereux News Vendor
Les Podewell Jack
John Chandler Tyrone
Martin Fisher Chess Player
Timothy O'Meara James "Ike" Eichling
Cops James Deuter
 Waiter
John M. Watson Snr Leo
Dick Sollenberger Suit Salesman
Doyle Devereux Clarke P. Devereux
Clarke P. Devereux Tuxedo Salesman
Ed Meekin Carriage Driver
Michael W. Nash Crazy Prisoner
Porscha Radcliffe Bum
Brittany Radcliffe Witch
Marlon A. Morris Cop Friend
Jesse J. Donnelly Policeman
Sandra Macat Stewardess
Rick LeFevour Hoodlum
Mahlon Sharp Tommy Bones

9,396 feet
 104 minutes

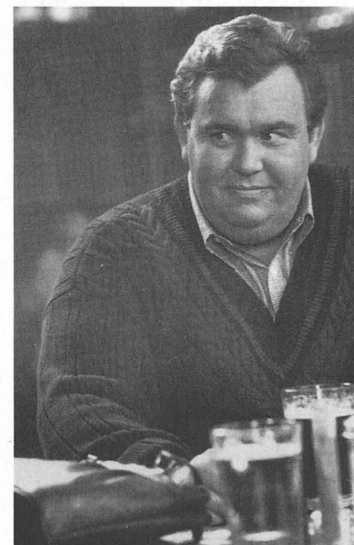
USA 1991

Director: Chris Columbus

Chicago. Danny Muldoon, a thirty-eight-year-old cop, lives with his domineering, aggressive mother Rose, bowing to her every whim because he constantly fantasises terrible things happening to her if he is tempted to strike out on his own. When the course of his work - delivering criminals to court and collecting corpses - takes him to a local undertaker's parlour, Danny meets Theresa Luna, a neurotically shy girl who works as a beautician for the dead, and asks her out. Although he is drawn to Theresa, who tentatively reciprocates his feelings, Danny is advised from all sides - by his married partner Sal, by his barroom cronies Doyle and Spats, and by his brother Patrick - not to get too involved.

Patrick, especially, wants Danny to stay at home with Rose so he won't feel guilty about neglecting his mother. However, Danny and Theresa begin an affair, which is interrupted when Danny takes Rose and Theresa out for a meal, and fails to stand up for Theresa when Rose makes racist remarks about her Sicilian and Polish parentage. Danny wins Theresa back by asking her to marry him, and Rose makes a move towards reconciliation at an engagement party. The night before the wedding, Danny is so concerned with Rose's safety that Theresa feels he will never break free, and neither turn up at the church.

A little while later, Doyle, an elderly bachelor, dies alone and almost nobody shows up for his funeral. Patrick has arranged for Danny and Rose to move to Florida, but Danny gives his ticket to Nick, an elderly Greek who loves Rose, and sets out to find Theresa, who has just boarded a train for New York. Using his police connections, Danny has the train stopped and persuades Theresa again to marry him. Danny fantasises Rose being the victim of



More Marty: John Candy

a hijack, but then realises that his mother can take care of herself.

● Much to the surprise of its makers and distributors, *Home Alone* – the last collaboration between director Chris Columbus and producer John Hughes – stormed into the record books as the third or fourth highest-grossing film of all time. And this despite the fact that it was an entirely formulaic piece that must count as the least interesting entry in either of its creators' filmographies. This follow-up – in which junior star Macaulay Culkin is rather more comfortably demoted to a funny cameo – finds the pair plugging away at their usual pace, deftly mixing sentiment with comedy and just enough originality to distinguish the results from 'product'.

This is basically an updating of the premise of *Marty* – with another shy, mother-dominated bachelor going against the wishes of his self-interested friends and relatives and starting a relationship with an awkward girl. Part of the film's problem, however, is that it can never quite bear to be as 'realistic' as its predecessor. Danny's first date with Theresa is a lamely magical picnic on the grass at the local baseball park, with a friendly groundsman letting off fireworks to add the feeling of a 'privileged moment'.

John Candy, giving his most serious performance to date, effectively expands the trace elements of bleakness that crept into his performances in Hughes' *Planes, Trains and Automobiles* and *Uncle Buck*, showing how the cut-up clown can also paint himself into a potentially tragic corner. And he is perfectly matched by Ally Sheedy's underplayed drudge, even if her severe psychological problems are ignored once they've been established. Typical of Hughes is the care taken with the large supporting cast, which means that potential headliners like Jim Belushi and Anthony Quinn are willing to take tiny but perfect roles. But also typical is the consequent feeling of overkill, as each of Danny's friends, relatives and acquaintances is given an individual scene to make a point that has already been made enough times.

Maureen O'Hara, returning to the screen after twenty years, attacks her role as the smothering Rose with venomous relish, though still soft enough at heart to exist within a mainstream commercial movie. In the end, this duality is the film's problem, as the dark edges a Paddy Chayefsky or a Mike Leigh would bring to the story have to be consistently lightened in the pursuit of a place in *Variety's* charts.

Kim Newman

Oscar

Certificate
PG
Distributor
Warner Bros
Production Company
Touchstone Pictures
In association with Silver Screen Partners IV
Executive Producers
Alex Ponti
Joseph S. Vecchio
Producer
Leslie Belzberg
Associate Producer
Tony Munafo
Production Supervisor
Janet Wattles
Production Co-ordinators
Pamela Cederquist
Orlando:
Maria Caccavo
Unit Production Manager
Paul Deason
Castings
Jackie Burch
Assistant Directors
Frank Capra III
Daniel R. Suhart
John Wildermuth
Simon Barron
Screenplay
Michael Barrie
Jim Mulholland
Based on the play by Claude Magnier
Director of Photography
Mac Ahlberg
Colour
Technicolor
Camera Operators
Norman G. Langley
Moshe Levin
Main Title Animation
David Allen
Productions
Editors
Dale Beldin
Additional:
Michael R. Miller
Production Designer
Bill Kenney
Art Director
WM. Ladd Skinner
Set Design
Nick Navarro
Sally Thornton
Richard F. Mays
Lawrence Hubbs
Steven Wolff
Set Decorator
Rick T. Gentz
Set Artists
Roger Dietz
Sharleen Bright
Special Effects
Howard Jensen
Paul Stewart
Music
Elmer Bernstein
Music Extract
"Largo al factotum"
from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* by Gioacchino Rossini, performed by Earle Patriarco
Orchestrations
Patrick Russ
Music Editor
Kathy Durning
Songs
"Rockin' in Rhythm"
by Duke Ellington,
Irving Mills, Harry Carney, performed by Duke Ellington & his Orchestra; "Sweet Georgia Brown" by Ben Bernie, Kenneth Casey, Maceo Pinkard, performed by Bing Crosby; "Tea for Two" by Vincent Youmans, Irving Ceasar, performed by Fred Waring & His Pennsylvanians; "Plain Dirt" by C. Stanton, performed by McKinney's Cotton Pickers; "Finucci Boogie" performed by Ralph Grierson



Sylvester Stallone: resurrected Runyon

Costume Design
Deborah Nadoolman
Costume Supervisor
Pam Wise
Costumers
David Page
Sarah A. Shaw
Brad Anderson
Leah P. Brown
Make-up Artists
Frank Griffin
Ron Berkeley
Gary Liddiard
Title Design
Penelope Gottlieb
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Supervising Sound Editor
Rick Franklin
Sound Editors
Paul Timothy Carden
Doug Jackson
Nils C. Jensen
Fred Judkins
Dave Kern
Don Malouf
Gary Mundheim
ADR Supervisor
James Beshears
ADR Group
Leigh French
Gigi Vorgan
Victor Brandt
Richard Brestoff
John Landis
Phil Proctor
Reni Santoni
Gregory Snegoff
Sound Recordists
William B. Kaplan
James Ashwill
Mary Jo Lang
Rudy Lara
Tony Jenkins
Music:
John Richards
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Chris D. Jenkins
Doug Hemphill
Mark Smith
Foley
Taj Soundworks
Artists:
Kevin Bartnof
Ellen Heuer
Research
Cheryl T. Smith
Production Assistants
Alexandre Gavras
Brian Hamblet
Christopher Bechtel
Scott Schulte
Peter L. Peterson
Stunts
Ted Barba
John Branagan
Charlie Brewer
Jimmy Casino
Tom Elliott
Brady Michaels
Stan Rodarte
Pigeon Wranglers
Cathy Morrison
David Sousa

Cast
Sylvester Stallone
Angelo Provolone
Ornella Muti
Sofia Provolone
Kirk Douglas
Eduardo Provolone
Peter Riegert
Aldo
Chazz Palminteri
Connie
Vincent Spano
Anthony Rossano
Marisa Tomei
Lisa Provolone
Tim Curry
Dr Thornton Poole
Don Ameche
Father Clemente
Harry Shearer
Guido Finucci
Martin Ferrero
Luigi Finucci
Kurtwood Smith
Lieutenant Toomey
Joey Travolta
Ace
Paul Greco
Schemer
Richard Foronjy
Knucky
Yvonne DeCarlo
Aunt Rosa
Richard Romanus
Vendetti
Arleen Sorkin
Manicurist
Eddie Bracken
Five Spot Charlie
Tony Munafo
Frankie the Roach
Robert Lesser
Officer Keough
Art LaFleur
Officer Quinn
Joycelyn O'Brien
Nora
William Atherton
Overton
Mark Metcalf
Milhous
Ken Howard
Kirkwood
Sam Chew Jr
Van Leland
Elizabeth Barondes
Theresa
Sal Vecchio
Vendetti Hood
Danny Goldstone
Cab Driver
Kai Wulff
Underwood Chauffeur
Linda Gray
Roxanne
Marshall Bell
Tom Grant
Louis D'Alto
Reporters
Rick Avery
Vendetti's Driver
Jim Mulholland
Oscar
Joe Dante
Face on the Cutting Room Floor
9,845 feet
109 minutes

USA 1991

Director: John Landis

● New York, 1934. Angelo "Snaps" Provolone promises his dying father Eduardo to relinquish his career as a gangster and to restore honour to the family name. His bid for respectability, however, is a puzzle both to his henchmen and to rival mobster Vendetti, who suspects him of planning some sinister master-stroke. The police are similarly unconvinced by Snaps' new image, and Lieutenant Toomey sets up a stakeout from which the Provolone mansion is closely observed. On the day that Snaps is to meet with his bankers to discuss fresh financial arrangements, his accountant, Anthony Rossano, arrives early: he wants a salary increase so he can afford to marry Snaps' daughter.

This is news to Snaps, who is also displeased to learn that Anthony and his daughter are lovers and that his accountant has swindled him out of \$50,000. Demanding that Anthony return the stolen funds, and furiously reminding his daughter Lisa that she is scheduled to marry the wealthy Bruce Underwood III, Snaps retires to a fitting with his tailors, the renowned Finucci brothers. Lisa consults the maid, Nora, who suggests that she pretend to be pregnant in order to marry the man she wants. Lisa has in fact been having an affair with Oscar, the Provolones' ex-chauffeur, who recently emigrated, while Nora loves Bruce Underwood III and is about to move to his house.

Further complication arrives in the form of a young lady, Theresa, who confidentially reveals to Snaps that she has pretended to be his daughter in order to win the love of Anthony. Snaps is at a loss when his wife Sofia, storming to Lisa's defence, demands that he find a husband for their pregnant offspring. Anthony returns with a bag of jewels and Snaps accepts this, along with a signed confession of fatherhood, in return for his consent to the marriage. Too late, Anthony learns from Theresa that Snaps has tricked him in order to ensure that Lisa has a husband.

But Lisa has now, for the first time, met Snaps' elocution teacher, Dr Thornton Poole, and they are quickly infatuated with each other. Anthony tries to buy back the jewels, but Nora has left with the wrong bag, causing attenuated difficulties. Nora's replacement as maid proves to be Roxanne, an old flame from Snaps' past; she reveals that she bore him a daughter, amazingly none other than Theresa. Snaps' bankers arrive, closely followed by Lieutenant Toomey and a pack of reporters; fortunately their attentions are ►

◀ diverted by Vendetti, about to start a gang war. With relief, Snaps presides over a double wedding: Lisa and Thornton, Theresa and Anthony. An interruption from Oscar is firmly suppressed.

● Based on a farce originally written for Louis de Funès (and filmed in 1967), the latest John Landis comedy aspires to resurrect the spirit of Damon Runyon, with a would-be screwball pace, characters intended to recall the best of Preston Sturges, and what Landis terms "that old-time studio feel". This hybridisation has inspired spectacular achievements in costume and setting, seemingly authentic to the prohibition era to the last detail of wallpaper and light-fitting, and the more remarkable for having to be created twice over (the set was destroyed by fire in mid-shoot). In all other respects, sadly, the erratic parodic sense that has intermittently come to Landis' rescue in the past proves self-defeating when applied to material already generously based on caricature.

In *Three Amigos*, Steve Martin and Chevy Chase were able to avert disaster through sheer comic panache. But the heavyweight timing of Sylvester Stallone in *Oscar* provides a leaden centre for an aimless collision of appropriations and affections: the urgent stutter of Eddie Bracken, the Italianate venom of Ornella Muti, the vaguely Wildean intrusions of Tim Curry and the elusive jewel bag, the dissonant guest appearances by Kirk Douglas, Yvonne DeCarlo and Linda Gray. Clutching its references to *The Marriage of Figaro* as if these were proven pedigree for any tale of romantic contrivance and deceit, *Oscar* nevertheless falls short of Mozartian wit and charm to a grimly dispiriting degree.

Philip Strick



... and failed Figaro

Prospero's Books



Contract terminated: John Gielgud

Certificate
(Not yet issued)

Distributor
Palace Pictures

Production Companies
Allarts (Amsterdam)/
Cinea/Camera One
(Paris)/Penta (Rome)
In association with
Elsevier Vendex
Film/Film Four
International/VPRO
Television/Canal
Plus/NHK
With financial
assistance from
Eurimages Fund,
Stichting
Produktiefonds voor
Nederlandse Films,
Pierson Holding &
Pierson

Executive Producers
Kees Kasander
Denis Wigman

Producers
Kees Kasander
NHK

Yoshinobu Numano
Katsufumi Nakamura

Co-producers
Philippe Carcassonne
Michel Seydoux

Associate Producers
Masato Hara
Roland Wigman

Production

Co-ordinators

France:

Brigitte Fauré

Netherlands:

Sophie Lambo

Kayo Yoshida

Production Manager

Karin van de Werff

Location Manager

Marty de Boer

Casting

UK:

Karen Lindsay Stewart

Polly Hootkins

Extras:

FTV

Assistant Directors

Gerrit Martijn

Sophie Fienness

Edith Hazelebach

Paul Marbus

Screenplay

Peter Greenaway

Based on the play

The Tempest by

William Shakespeare

Director of

Photography

Sacha Vierny

In colour

Camera Operator

Chris Renson

Infography

Eve Ramboz

Opticals

Image Creations

Editor

Marina Bodbyl

Production

Designers

Ben van Os

Jan Roelfs

Art Department

Production

Eljo Embregts

Wilma Schuemie

Set Decorators

Ben Zuydwijk

Rick Overberg

Wendy Valentijn

Set Dresser

Constance de Vos

Book Design

Han Ing Lim

Grasswork:

Daniel Harvey

Calligraphy

Brody

Neuenschwander

Agnes Charlemagne

Ellen Vomberg

Music

Michael Nyman

Music Performed by

Michael Nyman Band

Ariel's songs sung

by Sarah Leonard

Music Producer

David Cunningham

Choreographers

Karine Saporta

Caliban:

Michael Clark

Wardrobe

Dien van Straalen

Milanesse Ruffs:

Maggie McMahon

Milanesse Hats:

Jacques Janssen

Prospero's Cloak:

Emi Wada

Prospero's

Creatures

Ellen Lens

Make-up

Sara Meerman

Brigitte Pleizier

Annik Widdershoven

Mariël Hoevenaars

Gaby van der Meijden

Petra van Harte

Special Make-up

Effects

Sjoerd Didden

Titles Processing

Cineco Laboratories,

Amsterdam

Imagica, Japan

Sound Editors

Chris Wyatt

Dialogue:

Shirley Shaw

Digital Sound

Editing

Nigel Heath

Sound Recordist

Garth Marshall

Sound

Re-recordists

Edward Colyer

Brian Saunders

Sound Transfers

Hackenbacker

Footsteps Artists

Jackie Austin

Jean Sheffield

Annel Daniell

Technical

Supervisor

Hideichi Tamegaya

Technical Director

Masao Yamaguchi

Acrobatic Advisers

Martine Le Roy

Stéphane Dupre

Production

Assistants

Anja Cloosterman

Fulco Lorenzo

Bert Nijdam

Anke Battem

Stand-in

John Gielgud:

Jasper van der Linden

Cast

John Gielgud

Prospero

Michael Clark

Caliban

Michel Blanc

Alonso

Erlend Josephson

Gonzalo

Isabelle Pasco

Miranda

Tom Bell

Antonio

Kenneth Cranham

Sebastian

Mark Rylance

Ferdinand

Gérard Thoolen

Adrian

Pierre Bokma

Francisco

Jim van der Woude

Trinculo

Michiel Romeyn

Stephano

Orphéo

Paul Russell

James Thierree

Emil Wolk

Ariel

Marie Angel

Iris

Ute Lemper

Ceres

Deborah Conway

Juno

Mirale Jusid

Hélène Zellweger

Hélène Busnel

Florence Gielen

Dancers

10,800 feet

120 minutes

Filmed in English

Netherlands/France/Italy 1991

Director: Peter Greenaway

● The early seventeenth century. On a secluded island, Prospero, the deposed Duke of Milan, sits in his palace surrounded by a retinue of magical spirits, and begins to improvise the text of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. As he speaks the lines, the action unfolds... A storm blows up at sea, threatening the boat carrying Alonso, King of Naples, the king's brother Sebastian and son Ferdinand, an old courtier, Gonzalo, and Prospero's brother Antonio, who has usurped his dukedom.

As his daughter Miranda sleeps, Prospero tells her of their past: of his late wife Susannah; of how, in order to concentrate on his studies, he handed over his rule to Antonio, only to find himself being betrayed; and of how he and Miranda were driven away in a boat, equipped by his friend Gonzalo with a selection of Prospero's most prized books, from which, since landing on the island, he has derived his present power and knowledge. Prospero reminds his attendant spirit Ariel of how he freed him from servitude to the witch Sycorax, and with Miranda visits the witch's son, the savage Caliban.

Ferdinand arrives safely on the island, and when he meets Miranda, they fall in love; but Prospero pretends to take him prisoner. The rest of the party arrive on the island; while the king and Gonzalo sleep, Antonio and Sebastian plot to kill them and usurp the crown, but Ariel intercedes. Also washed ashore, Stephano, a butler, and Trinculo, a jester, encounter Caliban, who proposes that they murder Prospero and have Stephano rule the island in his place. Spirits bring a banquet to Alonso's party, but Ariel appears disguised as a harpy, to accuse them of their various crimes and to present Alonso with an image of his son's death. Prospero blesses the union of Miranda and Ferdinand by staging a masque presided over by the goddesses Iris, Ceres and Juno.

Trinculo, Stephano and Caliban try to invade Prospero's palace, but are repelled by spirits. Having witnessed Alonso's grief, Ariel persuades Prospero to have mercy on the lost party. As the king's party arrives at his palace, Prospero throws off his robes and, restoring Ariel's freedom, forgives his old enemies. Prospero proposes to leave the island with them on the now-restored ship, and orders all his books to be destroyed; the only ones saved, rescued from the water by Caliban, are a volume of Shakespeare's plays, and a smaller volume that completes it – the text of *The Tempest*. Prospero finally begs forgiveness of the audience and asks to be set free in his turn.

Just as Prospero's twenty-four volumes, which include the text of the drama we're watching, comprise a collection of all knowledge, *Prospero's Books* might itself be seen as the encyclopaedic summum of Greenaway's formal and thematic concerns to date. Certainly it alludes in one way or another to nearly all his previous films: it contains a book of mythology, a compendium of all possible narratives, like his own compendium film *The Falls*; it reprises his repertoire of water motifs, from *Water Wockets* to the recent short *Death in the Seine*; it ceaselessly interrogates the printed word and image (echoing *A Walk Through H*); and it directly transcribes visual and musical motifs from *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*.

Greenaway interprets *The Tempest* as the story of a mind reviewing its entire contents. The film's own re-reading of Greenaway's oeuvre could conceivably represent an attempt on the director's part to exhaust his repertoire before embarking on an entirely new project; and in a sense, any further steps in the direction indicated by this film would be superfluous. *Prospero's Books* does suggest at least two possible paths – an elaboration of the new cutting rhythm explored here; and a further exploration of the mixing of cinema and paintbox, of the play of identity and difference between film and video, and of the new type of cinematic literariness which that playfulness opens up. This is not the composed, urbane literariness of *Merchant-Ivory*, or even of *The Draughtsman's Contract*, but rather film rethought as an infinitely malleable 'writing'.

It may seem curious that this near-resumé of the director's films should be derived not from his own screenplay but from Shakespeare. However, this is only indirectly a 'version' of *The Tempest*. It would be truer to call it a variation in the musical sense, an annotated commentary (just as Greenaway and Tom Phillips annotated the *Inferno* in their *TV Dante*), or – quite literally – a reading of it. A commentary on the play is supplied by images of the books, generated by high-definition TV and computer-paintbox graphics. And there is an extraordinary amount of writing – words etched in stone, on parchment, in air, on water, in the image itself. To complete the effect, text, image and sound constantly blur into each other – the mariner's cry "We split! We split! We split!" becomes a motto for the film's infinite fragmentation of language and image.

Prospero is at once actor, author and director of his own script, and by no means the first such *magister ludi* in a Greenaway film. Tulse Luper, the

master forger of the early films, and the heroes of *The Draughtsman's Contract*, *The Belly of an Architect* and *Drowning by Numbers* all figured as projections of Greenaway's own self-questioning aspirations to transcendental authorship. At the same time, they functioned as flawed, doomed figures of the auteur as autocrat, and Prospero too is partly the victim of his own power. What Greenaway primarily reads in Shakespeare is a sense of awe at, but also a critique of, the autocratic imagination. Imprisoned in his guise as Renaissance doge, Prospero is prisoner of the various frames, mirrors and proscenium arches that compartmentalise the screen – until, that is, he renounces his power, and begs the audience to grant him a termination of the illusionistic contract.

Prospero's palace, like his mind – and like the film itself – resembles a labyrinthine department store, containing all possibilities in the most obscure arrangements. The film is organised so as to exhaust the viewer's perceptive capacities. This is partly because of an extremely brisk cutting speed that is something of a departure for Greenaway (although it echoes *A TV Dante* and the rhythmic editing of *Making a Splash*); and partly because of the sheer proliferation of imagery. The baroque visuals – fashioned as ever by cinematographer Sacha Vierny and designers Jan Roelfs and Ben van Os – are extravagant to the point of profligacy. When a succession of spirits present wedding gifts to the young couple, each gift is only briefly

glimpsed, but each is meticulously composed and lit to resemble a Dutch still life. Greenaway is no less profligate with his erudition, and the allusions to Renaissance Italian, Dutch Golden Age, Spanish and French nineteenth-century painting are legion.

The ostentatious erudition could in itself be considered kitsch – when the script calls for a screen full of sleeping mariners, they're inevitably lit like Géricault's "Raft of the Medusa" – but then it is quite knowingly so. Tumbling underwater nymphs recall the synchronised swimmers of *Making a Splash*, but also the glaucous odalisques of French academic painters like Bouguereau, not to mention their Busby Berkeley descendants. Indeed, the only true precursor of this filmed Shakespeare is Max Reinhardt's 1935 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, whose turbaned princeling is briefly reincarnated here by Ariel (another *Dream* echoed is Peter Brook's production, with its trapezes).

Greenaway obscures action while displaying it, employing several internationally illustrious actors and requiring them to remain not only mute but almost unrecognisable under ruffs, masks and vast hats. The fact that, for the most part, John Gielgud speaks all the parts jettisons the certainties usually provided by *dramatis personae*. Greenaway provides the elements of spectacle but leaves the task of ordering them to the viewer, whose role as final arbiter of the film's shape is addressed in Prospero's

closing speech. By presenting too much to take in at a glance, Greenaway tests to the limit his ideal of a painterly cinema. The tendency to over-emphasise points reaches a delirious apogee when the film animates textual images: an anatomy book disgorges throbbing, bloody organs, a bestiary swarms with frogs and lizards. This contributes to a general undermining of the smooth surface of the text, disturbing the (already slender) certainties of the play with evidence of words' tendency to become flesh (or water, or metal, or colour, or any of the other metamorphoses the books exhibit).

If Greenaway seems to be cramming like there's no tomorrow, there is at least a thematic justification. The images come and go, consuming themselves in a flash, just as the books finally combust or erase themselves. The film embodies a desperate awareness of the transitory, immaterial nature of images, to an extent countered by a fixation with the materiality of bodies, most disturbingly when Susannah opens up the 'book' of her own belly. The film seems impelled to take on every visual possibility imaginable, in as concrete terms as possible, before the whole "insubstantial pageant" reverts, as it must, to "the stuff that dreams are made on". To the cacophony of Prospero's "isle full of noises", Greenaway adds a visual and conceptual 'cacography' that invites reading all the more energetically for defying it.

Jonathan Romney



Fame effaced: Gérard Thoolen, Tom Bell, Michel Blanc, Erland Josephson, Kenneth Cranham

A Rage in Harlem

Certificate
18
Distributor
Palace Pictures
Production Company
Palace Pictures
In association with
Miramax Film
Corporation
Executive Producers
Harvey Weinstein
Bob Weinstein
Nik Powell
William Horberg
Terry Glinwood
Producers
Stephen Woolley
Kerry Boyle
Co-producers
Forest Whitaker
John Nicolella
Line Producer
Thomas A. Razzano
Production Supervisor
Palace:
Elizabeth Karlsen
Production Executive
Miramax:
Fred Milstein
Supervising Production Co-ordinator
Debra Jeffreys
Production Co-ordinator
Michael Boonstra
Unit Production Manager
Thomas A. Razzano
Location Manager
Jan Foster
Post-production Supervisor
Laura Viederman
2nd Unit Director
Julius le Flore
Casting
Aleta Chappelle
Extras:
Hajina D. Moss
Assistant Directors
Warren D. Gray
Brian Whitley
David Chapman
2nd Unit:
Patricia Anne Doherty
Screenplay
John Toles-Bey
Bobby Crawford
Based on the novel by
Chester Himes
Director of Photography
Toyomichi Kurita
Colour
Deluxe
2nd Unit Photography
Philip Alan Waters
Camera Operator
Philip Alan Waters
Editor
Curtiss Clayton
Associate:
Craig Hayes
Production Designer
Steven Legler
Art Director
Nina Ruscio
Set Decorator
K. C. Fox
Set Dressers
Julie Anderson
Bill Kroth
Sarah Young
James E. Downing
James Ryan Jnr
Lou R. Schnier Jnr
Ian Hardy
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Frank Ceglia
Music
Elmer Bernstein
Music Performed by
The Irish Film
Orchestra
Saxophone:
Kenneth Edge
Orchestrations
Christopher Palmer
Electronic Music
Cynthia Millar



Harlem light: Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines

Music Supervisor
Seymour Stein
Supervising Music Editor
Dan Carlin
Music Editors
Kathy Durning
Tom Carlin
Songs
"A Rage in Harlem" by Elmer Bernstein, Jonathan Paley, Jeff Vincent, Jimmy Scott, Andy Paley, "Adids" by Andy Paley, performed by Little Jimmy Scott and the Expressions; "Ain't Got No Home" by and performed by Clarence "Frogman" Henry; "Bo Weevil", "I'm in Love Again" by Dave Bartholomew, Antoine Domino, performed by Fats Domino; "Bo Diddley" by Ellis McDaniel, performed by Bo Diddley; "Brown Eyed Handsome Man" by and performed by Chuck Berry; "Church Bells May Ring" by M. A. Craft and the Willows, performed by The Willows; "Dust My Broom" by and performed by Elmore James; "Elevator Operator" by Andy Paley, Richard Penniman, performed by Little Richard; "Heaven Is in Your Heart" by Jeff Vincent, performed by Darryl Pandy; "Honest I Do" by Jimmy Reed, Ewart G. Abner Jnr, performed by Jimmy Reed; "Hymn for the Dead" by Francine Taylor, Dane Davis, performed by Francine Taylor; "I Asked for Water" by C. Burnett, performed by Howlin' Wolf; "I Put a Spell on You" by Jay Hawkins, "Yellow Coat" by Jay Hawkins, Irv Nahan, performed by "Screamin'" Jay Hawkins; "Juke" by Walter Jacobs, performed by Little Walter; "Just Because" by and performed by Lloyd Price; "Let the Good Times Roll" by Leonard Lee, performed by Shirley & Lee; "Luckiest Girl in the World" by Alison Clarkson, Andy Paley, "Why Oh Why"

by Alison Clarkson, Dean Ross, Paul Myers, performed by Betty Boo; "May the Lord Bless you Real Good" by Rev. James Cleveland, performed by The Charles Fold Singers; "Please, Please, Please" by James Brown, Johnny Terry, performed by James Brown; "Pledging My Love" by D. Robey, F. Washington, performed by Johnnie Ace; "Sugar Daddy Blues" by Andy Paley, Jeff Lass, LaVern Baker, Barry Marshall, performed by LaVern Baker; "We Belong Together" by J. Mitchell, Hy Weiss, Robert Carr, performed by Robert & Johnnie
Choreography
Otis Sallid
Costume Design
Nile Samples
Costumers
Supervisor:
M. A. Worobec
Key:
Tangela Crawford
Michael Safer
Set:
Alison Ahrens
Beverly Safer
Make-up
Matiki Anoff
Special Make-up Effects
Gino Blaze Crognale
Additional:
Margie Durand
Suzanne Sanders
Title Design
Saxon/Ross Film Design
Opticals
CFI
Supervising Sound Editors
Christopher Sheldon
Dane A. Davis
Sound Editors
Dialogue:
G. W. Brown
Randy Vandegrift
Kimberly Voigt
Foley Editor
Tom Hammond

Sound Recordists
Paul Cote
Jeannette Browning
Rich Gooch
ADR/Foley:
Tami Treadwell
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Wayne Heitman
John Boyd
David Campbell
ADR/Foley:
John Hussein
Post-production Sound Transfers
Marita Goldsmith
Bruce Swanson
Sound Effects Editors
Kini Kay
John Kwiatkowski
Stewart Nelson
Todd Toon
Foley Artists
Gregg Barbanell
Joan Rowe
Production Assistants
Key Set:
H. H. Cooper III
Set:
Ajay Date
Craig Denton
Kevin Jackson
Office:
Crystal Emery
Douglas Tirola
Stunt Co-ordinator
Julius Le Flore
Stunts
Greg Baxley
Angela Boone
Tony Brubaker
Stephanie Givens
Larry Holt
Pirry Lee Jackson
Henry Kingi
Henry Kingi Jnr
Von Roddy
Jock Toles
Joey Tureaud
Stand-ins
Steven Brittingham
Elonzo Coppins
Thom Fant
Ralph Garner
Miska Matthews
Tony Turner

Cast
Forest Whitaker
Jackson
Gregory Hines
Goldy
Robin Givens
Imabelle
Zakes Mokae
Big Kathy
Danny Glover
Easy Money
Badja Djola
Slim
John Toles-Bey
Jodie
Ron Taylor
Teena
Samm-Art Williams
Hank
Stack Pierce
Coffin Ed
George Wallace
Grave Digger
Willard E. Pugh
Claude X
Helen Martin
Mrs Canfield
Wendell Pierce
Louis
T. K. Carter
Smitty
Leonard Jackson
Mr. Clay
Reynaldo Rey
Blind Man
Clebert Ford
Porter
John Seitz
Lester Bunton
Jack Beatty
Sheriff
Birdie M. Hale
Olivette Miller-Briggs
Domestics
Beatrice Wind
Clerk
John W. Hardy
Reverend Gaines
Antonia Dotson
Female Mourner
Ernest Perry Jnr
Junkie
James Spinks
Bartender
Cornelius Stafford
Weasel
Tracy A. Taylor
Skanky Whore
Jesse James
Turnbow
Will Kill
James Copeland
Jailer
Jonathan Booker Phd
Doorman
Kevin Ruthven
Bus Driver
William L. Schwarber
Goon
Tasha O'Bryant
Minna
Arthur Burghardt
Bo
Eugene Robinson Jnr
Pug
Kipp Cochran
Cop
Robert Woods Jnr
Henchman
"Screamin'" Jay Hawkins
Himself
Leslie Dockery
Edgar Godineaux Jnr
Kimberly Hestor
Hajina O. Moss
Jon Palmer
John Parx
Herbert Rowllins
Romette Reaux
Mike Roscoe
Kiki Sheppard
Wynonna Smith
Chorus Dancers

9,725 feet
108 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Director: Bill Duke

● Natchez Mississippi, 1954.
A black gang led by Slim and his mistress Imabelle are double-crossed by white fence Lester over a chest of stolen gold ore; Slim kills Lester, having learnt about Easy Money, a fence operating in Harlem. In the ensuing police raid, Imabelle escapes with the ore. She arrives in Harlem and finds Easy Money at the Undertakers' Ball, but before they can strike a deal, he is arrested by policemen Coffin Ed and Grave Digger.

In need of a place to stay, Imabelle latches on to Jackson, a naive, religious undertaker's assistant, and moves in with him. But Slim and his gang arrive and persuade her to help con Jackson out of his money. Posing as a policeman, Slim 'arrests' Jackson after a fake money switch, and Jackson is able to buy his way free by stealing from his boss Mr Clay. Desperate to find Imabelle, Jackson enlists the help of his crooked brother Goldy, who agrees to help him in exchange for the gold.

At the club run by Goldy's transvestite friend Big Kathy, they learn about Slim's contact man Gus Parsons; posing as a rich punter, Jackson persuades Parsons to take him to Slim. Easy Money arrives at Slim's and strikes a deal for the gold. As he leaves, Jackson, Goldy and Big Kathy arrive with Parsons, closely followed by the police; the gang escapes, but Jackson and Goldy trail them to another hideout, where Slim kills Parsons. Jackson and Goldy arrive to find Imabelle alone, and try to remove the gold in a hearse, but in the attempt Big Kathy is killed by Slim.

Imabelle agrees to help Goldy retrieve the gold in exchange for half the profits. Easy Money and Slim conclude their deal, but fall out; in the ensuing gunfight, Goldy arrives in time to shoot Easy Money, and Imabelle subsequently shoots Slim, saving Jackson's life. Jackson is arrested for theft, but is bailed out by Clay, who thanks him for drumming up clientele. At the railway station, Goldy gets his cut of the money, and Jackson runs after the Mississippi train to be reunited with the departing Imabelle.

● Chester Himes' novel *A Rage in Harlem* was originally published as *For Love of Imabelle*, a title that better sums up the spirit of this film. Scriptwriters John Toles-Bey and Bobby Crawford have radically altered Himes' plot, lightening the tone considerably, and making Imabelle - who figures in the book largely as the absent goal of Jackson's quest - its flamboyant centre. Much is made of the relationship between

the apparently hard-as-nails vamp and her smitten swain; but despite Forest Whitaker's engaging performance, Jackson never quite convinces in his transition from doggedly pious naif into love-driven pragmatist – mainly because his baptism of fire consists less of emotional travail than of a succession of boisterous action sequences.

Enjoyable though it is, Bill Duke's mix of brisk action, sexy innuendo and cameo-studded comedy takes considerable liberties with the spirit of Himes' Harlem. Quite apart from the relegation of Himes' regular heroes Coffin Ed and Grave Digger to a marginal role, his grim humour is transmuted here into a sometimes laboured flipness. Similarly, the extremity of the novel's violence all too often becomes a glib, inconsequential brutality; for all the killing, everyone gets off remarkably lightly, with the exception of Easy Money's dog, the butt of the film's most successful gag.

The film also plays down Himes' vision by soft-peddalling the character of Goldy, here a personable rogue but originally a dope-shooting drag artist who makes a living by posing as a nun. The role of Big Kathy, peripheral in the book, is here played up for comic effect. But his relationship with Goldy is carefully divested of any hint of homosexuality or even effeminacy – Goldy's womanising nature is stressed, and when Kathy dies, it is in man's clothing. Taken together with the film's foregrounding of Imabelle's sexuality, this looks like an attempt to 'straighten out' Himes' Harlem for the box-office. Indeed, where Himes portrays the district's community spirit as a necessary reaction to the prevailing viciousness of poverty, Duke presents a rather convivial suburb, in which the only real disturbance is caused by out-of-townners.

That said, Duke shows considerable flair for setting the scene with bustling tableaux that stand out as welcome pauses in a convoluted plot – notably, an animated Undertakers' Ball presided over by "Screamin'" Jay Hawkins (not the least of the film's achievements, incidentally, is to reclaim 50s R&B for black culture). Otherwise, the film seems something of a lost opportunity. Himes' novels provided a blueprint for the hard-boiled portrayal of Harlem's underworld, something picked up in the black action films of the 70s (among them Ossie Davis' Himes adaptation *Cotton Comes to Harlem*). Duke had a fine opportunity to get at the very root of the genre; instead, he opts for a rather benevolent and utterly conventional cops-and-robbers skit.

Jonathan Romney

Return to the Blue Lagoon

Certificate PG
Distributor Columbia Tri-Star
Production Company Price Entertainment
Executive Producer Randal Kleiser
Producer William A. Graham
Co-producer Peter Bogart
Production Co-ordinator Sue Mackay
Unit Production Managers Peter Bogart
Australia/Fiji: Barbara Gibbs
2nd Unit Director Vincent Monton
Casting Penie duPont
Australia: Liz Mullinar
Consultants Assistant Directors Bob Roe Paul Grinder
Screenplay Leslie Stevens
Based on the novel *The Garden of God* by Henry de Vere Stacpoole
Director of Photography Robert Steadman
Colour Technicolor
2nd Unit Photography Vincent Monton
Underwater Photography/Supervisors Ron Taylor Val Taylor
Camera Operator Geoff Wharton
Editor Ronald J. Fagan

Production Designer Jon Dowding
Art Director Paul Ammitzboll
Special Effects Brian Pearce
Music/Musical Director Basil Poledouris
Orchestrations Greig McRitchie
Music Editor Steve McCroskey
Songs "A World of Our Own" by Barry Mann, Cynthia Weil, performed by Surface, featuring Bernard Jackson
Wardrobe Designer: Aphrodite Kondos
Titles/Opticals Co-ordinator: Margot Lindsay
Make-up Lesley Vanderwalt
Sound Re-recording Corporation
Supervising Sound Editors Dessie Markovsky Emile Razpopov
Sound Recordist Paul Brincat
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists Geoffrey H. Watkins
Foley Keith Olson Robert Friedman
Fight Co-ordinator Glen Boswell
Stunt Co-ordinator Phil Culotta

Cast
Milla Jovovich
Lilli
Brian Krause
Richard
Lisa Pelikan
Sarah Hargrave
Courtney Phillips
Young Lilli
Garette Patrick
Ratcliff
Young Richard
Emma James
Infant Lilli
Jackson Barton
Infant Richard
Nana Coburn
Sylvia
Brian Blain
Captain Hilliard
Peter Hehir
Quinlan
Alexander
Petersons
Giddens
John Mann
1st Captain
Wayne Pygram
Kearney
John Dicks
Penfield
Gus Mercurio
First Mate
John Turnbull
Dawes
Todd Rippon
Gullion
John Keightley
LeStrange
Pita Degei
Chief
Mikaele Nasau
Lone Cannibal
Annabel E. Graham
Baby

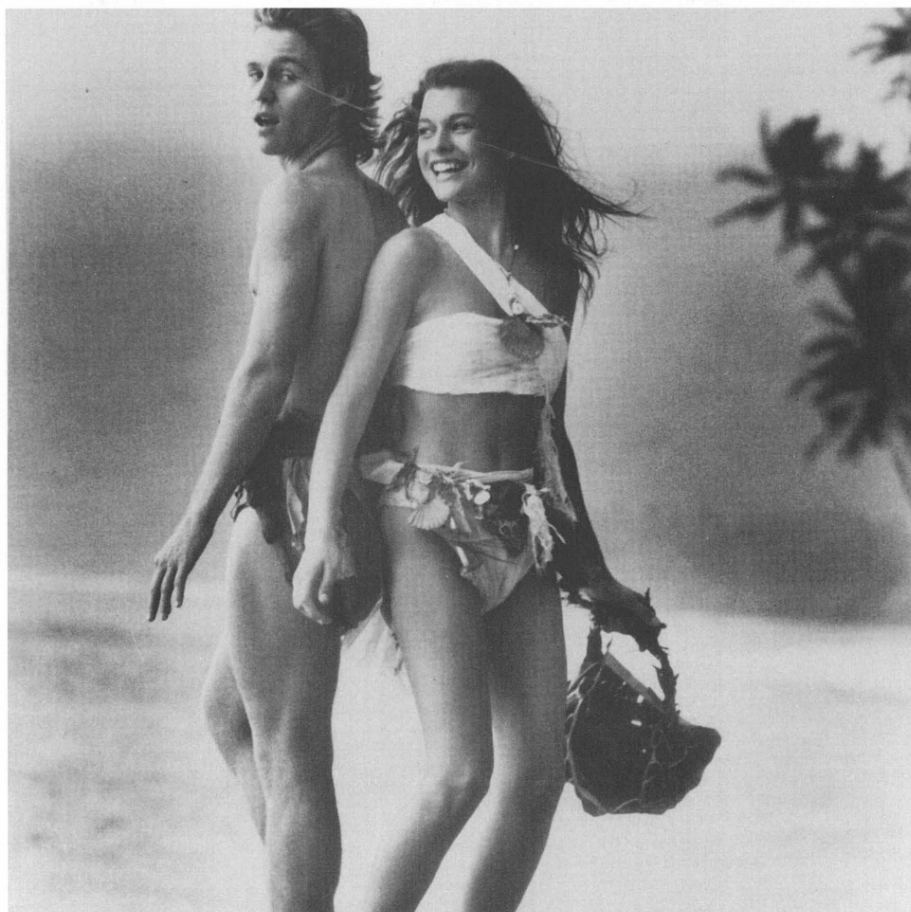
8,820 feet
98 minutes

USA 1991

Director: William A. Graham

In the late nineteenth century, the recently widowed Sarah Hargrave travels by ship from Tahiti to San Francisco with her year-old daughter, Lilli. During the crossing, a tiny boat is retrieved from the ocean; on board are a dead young couple and their barely alive two-year-old son. As Sarah nurses the boy (whom she adopts and names Richard) back to health, cholera breaks out on ship. Fleeing infection, Sarah and the two children are cast adrift with a guardian sailor in a small sail-boat. As the castaways suffer extremes of hunger and thirst, the sailor attempts to murder Richard, but is himself killed by Sarah.

Land is sighted, and Sarah guides the boat through treacherous reefs to an idyllic beach. There the threesome stumble on the makeshift house of Richard's deceased parents. The 'family' move in and learn how to live in the wild. Years pass, and Sarah teaches her charges about religion (her husband was a missionary), polite behaviour, propriety, modesty and sexual reproduction, before dying suddenly of pneumonia. Richard and Lilli grow into vibrant teenagers, she becoming houseproud and steadfast while he grows ever more reckless, racing a killer shark for recreation. Their dawning sexual feelings cause tension between the pair, and on a whim Richard ►



Paradise rehashed: Brian Krause, Milla Jovovich

Reviews

A Rage in Harlem
Return to the Blue Lagoon

◀ disobeys Sarah's teachings and visits the North side of the island, where he encounters a native village.

On his safe return, Lilli's relief turns to passion: the couple kiss, frolic and swiftly wed. One day a ship appears, bringing Captain Hilliard, the young and beautiful Sylvia, and various sailors. The seafarers set up camp on the island while preparing to sail back to civilisation with Lilli and Richard. Sylvia dazzles Lilli with her fancy clothing and make-up, and attempts to seduce Richard. A burly sailor tries to rape the now pregnant Lilli and steal a pearl which Richard has given her; in the ensuing chase, the sailor is killed by Richard's long-time adversary, the shark. Lilli declares that she wants her child to be born away from civilised wickedness; Richard agrees, and the couple reaffirm their love.

● Henry de Vere Stacpoole's lusty novel of 'natural' young love, *The Blue Lagoon*, has twice suffered the indignity of screen adaptation: in Frank Launder's coy 1949 Technicolor version, and Randal Kleiser's 1980 remake with its soft-focus nudity and crass sentimentality. This sequel, also based on Stacpoole, is notable mainly for its breathtakingly audacious plot contrivances: one cannot but be amazed at the ludicrous ingenuity with which the writer has managed to get the infant Richard back on to the island, and provide him with a female playmate with whom he can relive his parents' pubescent adventure. Disposing of Sarah with a convenient bout of pneumonia, the film simply reruns all the set-pieces for which Kleiser's version was famed: the discussions about 'touching yourself'; the mutual discovery of the wonders of women's breasts; the oblique references to masturbation; and (of course) romping-in-the-rock-pool sequences.

Yet while *Return to the Blue Lagoon* may offer discreet glimpses of teenage nipples and menstrual blood, it shies away from depicting the copulatory act itself, leaving our young lovers to progress from foreplay to marriage in ten seconds flat. As the film enters its final stages, the usual civilisation vs. barbarism business is hastily rehashed, with the 'cultured' seamen clumsily portrayed as devious and wicked, while the young lovers (and indeed their briefly glimpsed native neighbours) demonstrate an instinctive understanding of codes of honour and decency. The pair finally plump for remaining in Paradise forever, bringing up baby in the safety of God's garden – which only leaves the scriptwriters with the problem of contriving a new mate for said baby in *Blue Lagoon III*.

Mark Kermode

Soapdish



Dynasty undone: Sally Field...

Certificate

12

Distributor

UIP

Production Company

Paramount

Executive Producer

Herbert Ross

Producers

Aaron Spelling

Alan Greisman

Co-producers

Victoria White

Joel Freeman

Unit Production Managers

Joel Freeman

Roger Paradiso

Location Manager

Joe O'Hara

Casting

Lora Kennedy

Extras:

Producers Casting

Assistant Directors

John E. Hockridge

Joe Kontra

Steven Schottenfeld

Joyce Mayeda-Jones

Screenplay

Robert Harling

Andrew Bergman

Story

Robert Harling

Director of Photography

Ueli Steiger

Colour

Technicolor

Camera Operator

Sean McLin

Editor

Garth Craven

Additional Editor

Deborah Zeitman

Production Designer

Eugenio Zanetti

Art Director

Jim Dultz

Set Decorator

Lee Poll

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

Tony Van Den Ecker

Music

Alan Silvestri

Music Performed by

The Skywalker

Symphony Orchestra

Orchestrations

Alan Silvestri

Additional:

James Campbell

Supervising Music Editor

Jim Harrison

Songs

"El sol también se pone" by Ludar

Felsenstein, performed by Ludar

Choreography

Melissa Dexter

Tracy Singer

Costume Design

Nolan Miller

Costume Supervisors

James Lapidus

Rachel Stanley

Costumers

James F. Gadd

Victoria Snow

Make-up Artists

Lee Harmon

Perry Michael

Germain

Michael Blake

Body:

Nadege Schoenfeld

Title Design

Sarajo Frieden

Titles/Opticals

Cinema Research

Corporation

Supervising Sound Editor

Ronald Jacobs

Sound Editors

Richard Chasen

Stacey Foiles

Connie Kazmer

Laurel Ladewich

Michael D. Magill

Thomas O'Shea

Martha Pike

Robert Shoup

Gwendolyn Yates

Whittle

Supervising ADR Editor

Jeff Watts

ADR Editor

Juno J. Ellis

Foley Editors

Hael Kobayashi

Clare Freeman

Sound Recordists

Petur Hliddal

Music:

Dennis Sandt

ADR Recordist

Bob Baron

Foley Recordists

Christopher Boyes

Greg Curda

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Tom Johnson

Jack Leahy

David Slusser

Foley Artists

Ken Dufva

David Lee Fein

Marnie Moore

Dennie Thorpe

Production Assistants

Michael Bircumshaw

John Downer

Carlos Sanchez

Patti Lewis

Aaron Yarber

Stunt Co-ordinators

Benjamin J. Perry

NY:

Frank Ferrara

Utility Stunt

Cindy Folkerson

Cast

Sally Field

Celeste Talbert

Kevin Kline

Jeffrey Anderson

Robert Downey Jr

David Barnes

Whoopi Goldberg

Rose Schwartz

Carrie Fisher

Betsy Faye Sharon

Cathy Moriarty

Montana Moorehead

Teri Hatcher

Ariel Maloney

Paul Johansson

Bolt Brennan

Elisabeth Shue

Lori Craven

Arne Nannestad

Burton White

Tim Choate

AD

Kathy Najimy

Tawny Miller

Costas Mandylor

Mark

Cornelia Kiss

Receptionist

Robert Camiletti

Actor

Marianne Muellerleile

Mary Pat Gleason

Housewives

Michael Berkowitz

Young Autograph

Seeker

Amy Nabe

Woman Shopper

Sheila Kelley

Fran

Ivory Ocean

Bartender

Benjamin Stein

Barry Kivel

David Byron

Willie Garson

Nitwits

Garry Marshall

Edmund Edwards

Vince Melocchi

PA

Brick Karnes

Homeless Extra

Penny Gumeny

Wai Ching Ho

Mary Thompson

Hunt

Fans

Phil Leeds

Old Man

Herta Ware

Dorothy Patterson

Old Women

Nico De Silva

Armando Molina

Bus Boys

Gino Lucci

Bus Driver

Clive Rosengren

Doorman

Leeza Gibbons

John Tesh

Stephen Nichols

8,692 feet
97 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Michael Hoffman

● Forty-two year old actress

Celeste Talbert has won her eighth Daytime TV Award for portraying Maggie in America's favourite soap opera, *The Sun Also Sets*, but her lascivious co-star, Montana Moorehead (who plays Nurse Nan), is plotting her demise, via seduceable producer David Barnes. At Montana's bidding, Barnes attempts to sabotage Maggie's popularity by suggesting she murder a homeless person to boost the show's flagging ratings, provoking anger from scriptwriter Rose Schwartz.

Young Lori Craven is cast as a homeless mute, Angelique, who lunges at Maggie with a knife, but while filming the scene Celeste recognises Lori as her niece (the daughter of her dead twin sister), and instead of grappling, the two embrace. Lori has left college to pursue an acting career (of which Celeste is disapproving). Thwarted, Montana and Barnes attempt to harass Celeste by making Maggie the mother of Nurse Nan, and bringing Celeste's ex-lover and former co-star Jeffrey Anderson back to the series after an absence of twenty years, to revive his role as Dr Rod Randall (whose death by decapitation has been transmuted into a sojourn in Europe).



...Kevin Kline (top), Robert Downey Jr, Cathy Moriarty

Stepping Out

To Celeste's chagrin, Jeffrey charms Lori, and Barnes and Montana exploit the situation by having Dr Randall seduce Angelique, whom he is treating for muteness. As the couple move to kiss on-air, Celeste reveals that Lori is actually her and Jeffrey's illegitimate daughter, born in secret twenty years ago during a period when Maggie was supposed to be suffering from TB; Celeste's trauma caused her to have Jeffrey written out of the show. Celeste's revelations cause the ratings to rocket, as does the enraged Montana's claim that she is pregnant by Jeffrey.

Declaring that they cannot work together, Celeste, Jeffrey and Lori take part in a climactic show, reading an unseen script from a teleprompt to discover on-air which of them will survive, and who will be written out. As emotions run high, the cast abandon the script and ad-lib a scenario in which Maggie attempts to donate her brain to Angelique, who at the last moment bursts into speech. The three are reconciled, and Montana is revealed as a fraud, a sex-changed man.

The problem with attempting to parody daytime TV soaps is that, for some years now, the most successful of such shows have been little more than self-parodies. As a result, the joke is now not only tired, but second-hand. Director Michael Hoffman attempts to distract attention from the fact that we've heard it all before by conjuring up some flashily stylised TV-visual motifs (60s cartoon titles, overlapping scene changes, horrendous colours, etc.), but it's finally left to the cast to save the day. The ever reliable Kevin Kline rises nimbly to this challenge, turning in a nicely nasty performance as the pretentious, down-at-heel thespian who dreams of doing a one-man Hamlet, and his brief scenes with the surprisingly understated Robert Downey Jr are among the film's funniest.

It is telling that these scenes occur away from the frantic action of the TV studio where the 'soaps-parody' plot lurches clumsily onward. Sally Field, too, is ideally cast, having finally found a part for which her trade-mark whining, rubber-mouthed histrionics are entirely appropriate. The biggest surprise, however, is *Pretty Woman* director Garry Marshall, who turns in an astonishingly slimy cameo as the Head of Daytime TV. Although not a patch on Jim Sharman and Richard O'Brien's *Shock Treatment* for lifting the lid on daytime broadcasting, this remains an amiable comedy with enough good one-liners to keep the chuckles coming regularly.

Mark Kermode



Real life is...

Certificate
PG

Distributor
UIP

Production Company
Paramount

Executive Producer
Bill Kenwright

Producer
Lewis Gilbert

Co-producer
John Dark

Production Supervisor
Grace Gilroy

Production Co-ordinator
Alice Ferrier

Location Manager
Gordon Yang

Casting
Ross Clydesdale

Assistant Directors
Michel Cheyko

Screenplay
Richard Harris

Director of Photography
Alan Hume

Colour
Technicolor

Camera Operators
John Harris

Editor
Humphrey Dixon

Production Designer
Peter Mullins

Art Director
Alicia Keywan

Set Decorator
Steve Shewchuck

Set Dresser
Dennis Kirkham

Scenic Artist
Guenter Bartlik

Music

Peter Matz

Music

Arrangements

Dance:

Peter Howard

Music Editor

Robin Clarke

Songs

"Stepping Out"

by John Kander, Fred

Ebb; "Happy Feet"

by Milton Ager, Jack

Yellen; "Heart and

Soul" by Frank

Loesser, Hoagy

Carmichael; "Mean to

Me" by Fred E. Ahlert,

Roy Turk; "Beyond

the Blue Horizon"

by Leo Robin, Richard

A. Whiting, Franke

Harling; "Isn't It

Romantic" by Lorenz

Hart, Richard Rodgers

Choreographer

Danny Daniels

Costume Design

Candice Paterson

Costume Supervisor

Arthur Rowsell

Make-up

Supervisor:

Basil Newall

Head:

Patricia Green

Liza Minnelli;

Charistina Smith

Titles/Opticals

Geoff Axtell Associates

Title Co-ordinator

Andy Albrecht

Sound Editor

Alan Bell

Sound Recordist

Bruce Carwardine

Sound Re-recordist

Gerry Humphreys

Dolby stereo

Stunts

Ted Harlan

Rebecca Bell

Ernie Jackson

E. Dee Gold

Cast

Liza Minnelli

Mavis Turner

Shelley Winters

Mrs Fraser

Robyn Stevan

Sylvia

Jane Krakowski

Lynne

Bill Irwin

Geoffrey

Ellen Greene

Maxine

Sheila McCarthy

Andy

Andrea Martin

Dorothy

Julie Walters

Vera

Carol Woods

Rose

Luke Reilly

Patrick

Nora Dunn

Pam Lechner

Eugene Robert

Glazer

Frank

Geza Kovacs

Jerry

Raymond Rickman

Alan

Michael De Sadeleer

Michael

Angelo Colavecchia

Electrician

Stella Spowell

Gladys O'Connor

Patients

Dean McDermott

Young Man at Bar

Charles Hayter

Priest

David Harvey

Stage Door Keeper

Peter Howard

Master of Ceremonies

Brian Leonard

Bongo Player

Vanessa Harwood

Ballerina

Tara Young

Lili Francks

Bonnie Monaghan

Candace Jennings

Janet Kloeble

Kristi Breen

Madelaine Paul

Steve Girardi

Lynda Champagne

Lesley Ballintyne

William Orlowski

Anne Hodgkinson

Dancers

9,880 feet

110 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Lewis Gilbert

Mavis Turner, a once promising chorus-liner, lives with her 'one-hit wonder' boyfriend Patrick in Buffalo, New York, and divides her time between singing with him in a bar and teaching a small tap class in an abandoned church. Regularly belittled by the insecure Patrick, Mavis gradually finds a sense of purpose in preparing her disparate class for a charity performance at the behest of Pam Lechner, condescending director of the prestigious Centre for the Performing Arts. The class comprises the ebullient, flirtatious Sylvia, a wanly gentle nurse, Lynne, recently upset by the first death on her ward, Maxine, an extrovert boutique owner, Rose, who may be big and black but is devoid of 'rhythm', and Dorothy, a repressed librarian. Their accompanist is the dourly sensitive Mrs Fraser, a pianist fallen on hard times.

The group's sole male is Geoffrey, whose wife has left him and who strikes up a relationship with Andy, for whom the class is one way of escaping a violent husband. Newcomer is Vera, a middle-aged Englishwoman, whose pretensions and acid tongue mask the sadness of a failing second marriage. Tension mounts as the date of the performance draws near, and the group's inadequacies as performers become painfully clear. Mavis finds herself under pressure from Patrick to throw in the towel and move to Los Angeles with him. But when she discovers she is pregnant and Patrick rejects the child, she opts to see the show through.

The only opportunity for a full on-stage rehearsal is muffed when Andy, who has been terrorised and forbidden to attend by her husband, arrives late. Her confidence shattered, she is provoked into a showdown by a few sharp words from Vera. Before the performance, Andy's husband forces his way backstage, but is physically repelled by Geoffrey. Despite accidents, the troupe wins over its audience, and they are invited back the following year. By that time, Mavis has a baby waiting in the wings, and the Mavis Turner Tappers have mastered both their routines and the top hat and cane props that proved such stumbling blocks the first year.

Stepping Out, adapted by Richard Harris from his award-winning play with few concessions to the new medium, is a revival of that old and not necessarily unwelcome war horse, the 'putting on a show' musical. There are the ungainly amateurs who overcome crises and angst to 'come good' (more or less) ▶

◀ on the night; there is a hesitant smattering of romance; there is the frisson involved in casting song-and-dance star Minnelli as a could-have-been and ex-chorus liner (and, of course, that moment when she reveals the star quality we knew was there all along when she dances, supposedly alone, but in fact spied on by her admiring pupils). And there is the big closing number in which professionals – professional performers and show-biz stars, if not professional dancers – play amateurs becoming, before our eyes, professionals.

So far, so good – or at least acceptable. But the film is hampered by a lack of crispness in the dialogue, and by the lack of a firm directorial point of view. Lewis Gilbert's pedigree suggests a potentially interesting emphasis on wayward women (*Alfie*, *Educating Rita* and *Shirley Valentine*), but how these characters come across is largely dependent on performance. Here each more or less goes blithely her own separate way. Liza Minnelli has an opportunity to reveal competence in low-key moments (song and dance apart); Julie Walters maintains her broad comic style while playing against (working-class) type; only Shelley Winters comes off badly in a one-note role as the class pianist.

'Off-stage', the script follows the characters into their private lives and the realm of soap opera. Geoffrey's wife has left him; nurse Lynne copes with her first death on the ward; Rose's son is unemployed (a problem solved in one of the understated instances of female solidarity that form an under-current in the drama). Most tellingly, Mavis herself is shown trapped within a relationship in which she is systematically belittled both personally and professionally – Patrick curtly dismisses her (inspired?) rephrasing of a number they perform together in a bar. In this context, the only possible romance is that of the self, of sublimation and self-improvement: Geoffrey finally masters a difficult step; Andy defies her husband to make something of herself; and Mavis pulls the Tappers together and has her child.

Set beside this, the film's big numbers seem uncomfortably out of place, and quite emphatically 'about' something else. Mavis' dance is choreographed as an explicit reference to Minnelli's own show-business pedigree as the daughter of Judy Garland, just as the *Cabaret* references honour her part in that box-office success. The effect is to lift these scenes, and with them The Tappers' triumph, beyond the 'real', making show-business itself appear remote and divorced from, rather than rooted in, everyday life.

Verina Glaessner

Terminator 2: Judgment Day

Certificate 15

Distributor Guild

Production Companies

Carloco Pictures
A Pacific Western production
In association with Lightstorm Entertainment

Executive Producers

Gale Anne Hurd
Mario Kassar

Production Executive

Jim Morris

Producer

James Cameron

Co-producers

B. J. Rack
Stephanie Austin

Production Co-ordinators

Jane Prosnit
Special Visual Effects:

Beth Bloc

Unit Production Manager

Dirk Petersmann

Location Managers

Richard Klotz
Steve Dawson

Jim Morris

Post-production Executive

Ed Jones

Post-production Supervisor

Pamela Easley

Post-production Co-ordinator

Crystal Dowd

2nd Unit Director

Gary Davis

Casting

Mali Finn

Extras:

Uno Casting
San José Extras:

Abra Edelman

Assistant Directors

J. Michael Haynie
Terry Miller

Scott Laughlin
Frank Davis

Tony Perez
Dustin Bernard

James Lansbury
Xochi Blymyer

2nd Unit:
George Parra

Randall Badger
Barry Thomas

Grant Gilmore
David Fudge

Screenplay

James Cameron
William Wisher

Director of Photography

Adam Greenberg

Colour

Prints by Technicolor

2nd Unit Photography

Michael A. Benson

Special Visual Effects Supervising

Director of Photography

Dennis Skotak

Special Visual Effects Photography

James Belkin
George D. Dodge

Optical Photography

Supervisor:

Bruce Vecchitto

Camera:

Don Fergus
David Tucker

Dave Emerson

ILM Photography

Co-ordinator:

Jack Gallagher

Plate:

Patrick McArdle
Chuck Schumann

Carl Miller

Effects:

Terry Chostner
Bob Hill

Aerial Photography

David L. Butler

Camera Operators

Michael A. Benson
Michael St Hilaire

Extra:

Paul C. Babin

2nd Unit:

Don Fauntleroy

Special Visual Effects:

Christopher Warren

Paul Gentry
Michael Karp

Steadicam Operator

James Muro

Special Visual Effects

Fantasy II Film Effects

Producer:

Leslie Huntley

Supervisor:

Gene Warren Jr

Sequences:

4-Ward Productions

Ginger Theisen

Shot Supervisors:

Jay Riddle

Doug Smythe

Lincoln Hu

George H. Joblove

Scott E. Anderson

Thomas A. Williams

Stefen M. Fangmeier

Department Manager:

Douglas Scott Kay

Software Developers:

Eric Enderton

Carl Nai Frederick

Michael J. Natkin

Angus Poon

John F. Schlag

Tien Truong

Animation

Supervisor:

Steve Williams

Animators:

John Andrew

Berton Jnr

Geoff Campbell

Richard L. Cohen

Jonathan French

Christian Hogue

Elizabeth Maxwell

Keith John Nelson

Joseph M. Pasquale

Stephen Rosenbaum

Andrew Schmidt

Alex Seiden

Annabella Serra

Terminator POV

Video/Graphic Displays

Video Image

Rhonda C. Gunner

Gregory L. McMurty

Richard E. Hollandar

John C. Wash

Digital

Supervisor:

Stuart Robertson

Artists:

Barbara Brennan

Jim Hagedorn

Gordon Baker

Transfer Co-ordinator:

Susan Adele Colletta

Transfer Operator:

Greg Maloney

Compositing:

Pacific Data Images

Scanning

Supervisor:

Joshua Pines

Co-ordinator:

Lisa Vaughn

Operators:

Randall K. Bean

George Gambetta

Michael Cooper

Roto Supervisors

Tom Bertino

Special Visual Effects:

Bret Mixon



Not an ideal father: Linda Hamilton

Computer Graphics

Industrial Light & Magic

Co-ordinators:

Judith Weaver

Ginger Theisen

Shot Supervisors:

Jay Riddle

Doug Smythe

Lincoln Hu

George H. Joblove

Scott E. Anderson

Thomas A. Williams

Stefen M. Fangmeier

Department Manager:

Douglas Scott Kay

Software Developers:

Eric Enderton

Carl Nai Frederick

Michael J. Natkin

Angus Poon

John F. Schlag

Tien Truong

Animation

Supervisor:

Steve Williams

Animators:

John Andrew

Berton Jnr

Geoff Campbell

Richard L. Cohen

Jonathan French

Christian Hogue

Elizabeth Maxwell

Keith John Nelson

Joseph M. Pasquale

Stephen Rosenbaum

Andrew Schmidt

Alex Seiden

Annabella Serra

Terminator POV

Video/Graphic Displays

Video Image

Rhonda C. Gunner

Gregory L. McMurty

Richard E. Hollandar

John C. Wash

Digital

Supervisor:

Stuart Robertson

Artists:

Barbara Brennan

Jim Hagedorn

Gordon Baker

Transfer Co-ordinator:

Susan Adele Colletta

Transfer Operator:

Greg Maloney

Compositing:

Pacific Data Images

Scanning

Supervisor:

Joshua Pines

Co-ordinator:

Lisa Vaughn

Operators:

Randall K. Bean

George Gambetta

Michael Cooper

Roto Supervisors

Tom Bertino

Special Visual Effects:

Bret Mixon

Rotoscopers

Terry Molatore

Jack Mongovan

Joanne Hafner

Sandy Houston

Editors

Richard A. Harris

Mark Goldblatt

Conrad Buff

Special Visual Effects:

W. Peter Miller

Production Designer

Joseph Nemecek III

Special Visual Effects:

Michael Novotny

Art Director

Joseph P. Lucky

Art Department

Co-ordinators

Carla S. Nemecek

John Rosengrant

Shannon Shea

Shane Mahan

Set Design

Walter Martishius

Carole L. Cole

Set Decorator

John M. Dwyer

Set Dressers

Joe Pizzorusso

William Dolan

Craig Baron

On-set:

R. Patrick McGee

Conceptual Artist

Stephen Burg

Illustrator

George Jensen

Special Visual Effects:

John Eaves

Storyboard Artist

Phillip Norwood

Special Effects

Supervisor:

Joseph Viskocil

Co-ordinators:

Thomas L. Fisher

Jennifer Bell

Lead Man:

Foley RecordistChristopher Boyes
Dolby stereo**Sound Re-recordists**Tom Johnson
Gary Rydstrom
Gary Summers**Sound Effects****Editors**Robert Shoup
Tim Holland
Teresa Eckton
Ken Fischer
Richard Hymns
Ethan Van Der Ryn
Larry Oatfield**Foley Artist**

Dennie Thorpe

Technical AdvisersUzi Gal
Police:
Call the Cops
Randy Walker
Ed Arneson
Michael Albanese
James Dahl
Steven Stear**Consultants**Steel Mill:
Marv Freeman**Visual:**

Jerry Pojawa

Production**Assistants**John Davis
Jeffrey D. Nelson
Rachel Oberstein
Michael Pitt
Kristine Spindler
Liam Phillips
Michael Vigilietta
Leslie Schor
Post-production:
Joseph Berger-Davis
Special Visual Effects:
Scott Beverly
James Cook
Steve Cohen
Tony Moffet
Kirby Jones
Paula Pirok**Stunt Co-ordinators**Joel Kramer
Gary Davis**Stunts**Janet Brady
Bob Brown
Doc D. Charbonneau
Gilbert B. Combs
Jeff Dashnaw
Debbie Evans
Billy Hank Hooker
Norman Howell
Thomas J. Huff
Larry Johnson
Peter Kent
Lane Leavitt
Bill Lucas
Cotton Mather
Bobby Porter
David Webster
Glenn Wilder
Dick Ziker**Stand-ins**Arnold
Schwarzenegger:
Peter Kent
Linda Hamilton:
Mary Ellen Aviano
Edward Furlong:
Rhonda Miller**Weapons****Master:**

Harry Lu

Specialist:

Tony Didio

Aerial Co-ordinator

Chuck Tamburro

Cast**Arnold****Schwarzenegger****The Terminator****Linda Hamilton****Sarah Connor****Edward Furlong****John Connor****Robert Patrick****T-1000****Earl Boen****Doctor Silberman****Joe Morton****Miles Dyson****S. Epatha****Merkerson****Tarissa Dyson****Castulo Guerra****Enrique Salceda****Danny Cooksey****Tim****Jenette Goldstein****Janelle Voight****Xander Berkeley****Todd Voight****Leslie Hamilton****Gearren****Ken Gibbel****Douglas****Robert Winley****Cigar Biker****Pete Schrum****Lloyd****Shane Wilder****Trucker****Michael Edwards****Old John Connor****Jared Lounsbery****Casey Chavez****Kids****Ennalls Berl****Bryant****Don Lake****Mossberg****Richard Vidan****Weatherby****Tom McDonald****Cop****Jim Palmer****Gerard G. Williams****Jocks****Gwenda Deacon****Night Nurse****Don Stanton****Lewis, Guard/****Lewis T-1000****Colin Patrick Lynch****Attendant****Noel Evangelisti****Hospital Guard****Nikki Cox****Lisa Brinegar****Girls****De Vaughn Nixon****Danny Dyson****Tony Simotes****Vault Guard****Diane Rodriguez****Jolanda Salceda****Dalton Abbott****Infant John Connor****Ron Young****Pool Cue Biker****Charles Robert****Brown****Tattoo Biker****Abdul Salaam****El Razzac****Gibbons****Mike Muscat****Moshier****Dean Norris****SWAT Team Leader****Charles Tamburro****Police Chopper Pilot****J. Rob Jordan****Pick-up Truck Driver****Terrence Evans****Tanker Truck Driver****Denney Pierce****Mark Christopher****Lawrence****Burly Attendants****Pat Kouri****SWAT Leader****Van Ling****Cyberdyne Tech****12,150 feet****(70mm) 15,120 feet****135 minutes****USA 1991****Director: James Cameron**

Some ten years after the arrival of a T-800 Terminator cyborg from the future on an unsuccessful mission to kill Sarah Connor (see *The Terminator*, MFB, February 1985), a more advanced T-1000 Terminator arrives in Los Angeles to kill Sarah's son John, destined to become leader of the human resistance in the 2029 war between mankind and 'intelligent' machines. The T-1000 is narrowly preceded by another T-800, programmed and sent back by the adult John Connor to protect his childhood self. Sarah is now incarcerated in Pescadero State Hospital as a dangerous paranoid schizophrenic in the care of the unsympathetic Dr Silberman, while John is a 'problem child' in the care of foster parents Janelle and Todd Voight.

Clothing themselves as a biker and patrol cop respectively, the T-800 and T-1000 independently search for the young John Connor and clash for the first time when they locate him in a video-game parlour. John flees with both Terminators in pursuit, and eventually accepts the T-800 as friendly; realising that it is programmed to obey him, he orders it to stop killing people and insists (over the T-800's objections) that they must free his mother. The T-1000 (which is composed of liquid metal and able to take on almost any organic or inorganic form) kills and impersonates John's foster mother in a failed attempt to lure the boy home. It then heads for the hospital, intending to kill and impersonate Sarah.

Before it reaches her, she manages to escape from her cell and gets away with the help of John and the T-800. They drive south to the homestead of Sarah's friend Enrique Salceda, who guards a munitions cache, and the T-800 explains what the future will bring. Cybernetics genius Miles Dyson will soon develop the super-computer Skynet, using a microchip salvaged from the first T-800 sent back in time; Skynet will become 'self-aware' in 1997, launch a nuclear war and then mastermind the subsequent war to wipe out all remnants of humanity. Brooding on this information, Sarah strikes out alone to kill Miles Dyson at his home, pursued by John and the T-800.

Sarah devastates Dyson's home but cannot bring herself to kill him. But when the T-800 proves that it is, indeed, a cyborg from the future, Dyson agrees to lead them to his lab to destroy his research. There they run foul of security guards and are forced to shoot their way out; Dyson dies a hero, ensuring that his work to date is blown to pieces. The T-1000 hears of the fracas on police radio

and gives chase, cornering Sarah, John and the T-800 in a steel foundry. After a series of violent clashes, the T-1000 is terminated in a vat of molten steel. The T-800 insists that it, too, must be terminated so that its controlling microchip can never be misused. Sarah and John tearfully lower it into the molten steel.

James Cameron's sense of his own mission seems to be growing as fast as his production budgets. *Terminator 2* is less a sequel to *The Terminator* than a benign revision of the earlier film, a parable in which Arnold Schwarzenegger's matchless T-800 is transformed from an unstoppable killing machine into man's best friend and an ideal father figure. This transformation is, of course, in line with the shift in Arnie's image from macho action star to potential Republican candidate and family favourite, but it has been clear since *The Abyss* that Cameron is a writer-director who takes his messages very seriously. Here he gives Sarah Connor an occasional voice-over narration that points up the moral of the story as preachily as anything in a 30s social-problem picture: "If a machine can learn the value of human life", she gasps, "then maybe we can too".

If the original film flirted with the idea of a secular alternative to New Testament myth, *Terminator 2* goes the whole hog by titling itself "Judgment Day" and introducing a redeemer-to-be with the initials J. C. The film sentimentally rhymes the T-800's 'personal growth' with the boy John Connor's discovery of his social conscience as he moves from skateboarding, video-game-playing and petty crime to filial piety. Like much else in the movie, this is accomplished with economy and a fair measure of wit. When the T-800 starts trashing an innocently obstructive bystander, the boy intervenes: "Jeez, you were gonna kill that guy". "Of course", intones Arnie, "I'm a Terminator". From this point on, the T-800 goes out of its way to avoid terminating anything except its implacable foe, the T-1000.

This caring sensibility extends even to the embittered Sarah, who vengefully clobbers her way out of captivity in the asylum but then cannot bring herself to kill the black scientist Miles Dyson when she discovers him at home in the bosom of his *Cosby Show* family. Sarah's incarceration, incidentally, is one of several non-sequiturs from the original film (she is locked up for babbling on about Terminators and impending nuclear devastation, as if no one else had seen the old T-800). But she is none the less a clear descendant of the heroine of *Aliens* – another in Cameron's gallery of strong and resourcefully maternal women. The price she has to pay for her independence, inevitably, is exclusion from the tremulous male bonding between her son and the T-800; it's hard to project her role beyond the final fade-out.

The element that enables Cameron to reconcile his conviction that human life is sacred with the more profane demands of the genre is the appearance of the T-1000, without doubt the most sophisticated monster so far in screen history. The T-1000 marks the point where computer-generated imagery equals and overtakes the protean effects achieved with lower-tech resources by the Rob Bottin crew for John Carpenter's *The Thing*. The T-1000 is essentially a puddle of liquid metal capable of taking on human and mechanical forms instantaneously, resulting in both a series of ingenious physical transformations and numerous shots in which the actor Robert Patrick appears part-human, part-metal.

There's no disputing that its quaint morality earns *Terminator 2* the label "A James Cameron Film", but there is equally no doubt that it represents another triumph for corporate film-making. What price the auteur in the days of five-minute credit-title sequences? Maybe the Academy should introduce a new Oscar for the Camerons, Burtons, Verhoevens and McTiernans of the New Hollywood: Best Ringmaster?

Tony Rayns



The shape of troubles to come

Tetsuo (Tetsuo: The Iron Man)

Certificate
(Not yet issued)
Distributor
ICA Projects
Production Company
Kaiju Theatre
In association with
Japan Home Video/
K2 Spirit/SEN
Producer
Shinya Tsukamoto
Assistant Director
Kei Fujiwara
Screenplay
Shinya Tsukamoto
Directors of Photography
Shinya Tsukamoto
Kei Fujiwara
Editor
Shinya Tsukamoto
Art Director
Shinya Tsukamoto
Special Effects
Shinya Tsukamoto
Music
Chu Ishikawa
Insert Music
Akio Okusawa
Music Operator
Mitsuhito Ozaki
Wardrobe
Kei Fujiwara
Sound
Asahi Sound Studio
Production Assistants
Nobu Kanaoka
Hiroyuki Kobato
Tomoko Ishigami
Tomoko Kodaka
Subtitles
Kiyoo Joo
Tony Rayns

Cast
Tomoroh Taguchi
The Salaryman
Kei Fujiwara
His Girlfriend
Nobu Kanaoka
Woman in Glasses
Shinya Tsukamoto
Young Metals Fetishist
Naomasa Musaka
Doctor
Renji Ishibashi
Tramp

2,412 feet
67 minutes
(16mm)

Subtitles

Japan 1989

Director: Shinya Tsukamoto

● A young metals fetishist inserts some scrap metal into a self-inflicted gash in his thigh. Soon after, he is the victim in a hit-and-run accident. Next morning, the car's driver, a typical salaryman, is using his electric shaver when he notices a small metal 'thorn' protruding from his cheek. Things get worse on his way to work: a woman in glasses at the subway station appears to sprout metallic tentacles and attack him. The salaryman later finds 'scabs' of metal on his body.

Next time he sleeps with his girlfriend, the salaryman has a nightmare in which he is sodomised by organic metal machinery. He wakes to find (or imagine) that metal is taking over his body. When he attempts to make love, his penis mutates into a drill and he locks himself away to avoid harming his girlfriend. They finally achieve a mutilated ecstasy, which the girlfriend survives by stabbing him in the neck.

The fetishist meanwhile dreams of metal heaven. He replays his memories like video loops, recalling both the moment of the accident and the reaction of the doctor who subsequently discovered a shard of metal in his brain. Realising that he has acquired telepathic powers, the fetishist reaches out mentally to the salaryman and his girlfriend. He initially menaces both of them, but then promises the salaryman "a new world of metal". The salaryman flees in dismay.

The fetishist's psychic assault falters when a tramp comes upon him and starts beating him up. But the fetishist eventually confronts the salaryman in the disused factory where he has taken refuge. Both are now more metal than flesh. The fetishist, whose hatred has shaded into love, explains that he needs to merge with the salaryman to overcome the rust that is attacking his frame. The two come together in a flailing blur of metal parts... A huge metal monster with two faces stands ready to take the streets of Tokyo, convinced that the whole world can be mutated into metal.

● Shinya Tsukamoto's gleefully extremist movie, made independently on a shoestring, finds the improbable middle ground between Sam Raimi's *Evil Dead* and Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks*. It is less a conventional narrative (the above synopsis, heavily indebted to the director's own notes, is misleadingly coherent) than a sustained, free-form blast of cruel, convulsive and perverse images. There are fleeting traces of anti-bourgeois satire in the caricature of the 'straight'

salaryman, but the film as a whole plays more like the image track to a particularly deranged thrash-metal album.

Tsukamoto (born 1960) clearly went through the standard Japanese infatuations with Godzilla movies, s-f manga, video-game arcades and so on. But he is one of the very few in his generation who has followed the example of J.G. Ballard in pursuing his youthful fantasies to their hearts of darkness. A product of the Fine Arts Department at Nihon University, Tsukamoto worked in an advertising agency for a couple of years before dropping out to found and run the small Kaiju ("Sea Creature") Theatre Group, under whose aegis he made shorts on Super-8. *Tetsuo* was his first 16mm film, and its 'crossover' success in Japan (it graduated from screenings in rock clubs and fringe theatre halls to actual cinemas) earned him an invitation to direct a 35mm feature starring Kenji Sawada for Shochiku.

Tetsuo is a live-action video game that emphasises bodily functions and physical pain rather than high-tech wizardry. Tsukamoto first tapped this vein in his Super-8 shorts *The Phantom of Regular Size* (*Futsu-Size no Kaijin*, 1986) and the prize-winning *Adventures of Denchu-Kozo* (*Denchu-Kozo no Boken*, 1987), anarchic fantasies that don't so much challenge the line between organic and inorganic matter as put it through the kitchen blender. *Tetsuo*, however, goes further than its predecessors, both in scale of conception and in its alarmingly vivid effects. This is not just a matter of metal variations on s-m iconography but, more intriguingly, of suggesting that mental and physical aggression might be expressed physically through transmutation of the flesh into metal. Hence the early scene of conflict between strangers on the platform of a subway station becomes an expressionist exaggeration of everyday irritation and hostility, just as the image of a

phallus as a giant drill later expresses the tangle of libidinal and other impulses released by the act of coitus.

The most remarkable thing about *Tetsuo* is its footloose way with received ideas and inspirations. Its immediate antecedents are obviously Western splatter movies and Katsuhiro Otomo's *Akira* (the latter with a character called Tetsuo who fashions himself an organic metal arm through sheer will power). But Tsukamoto has no interest in emulating their reliance on orthodox, melodramatic structures; he draws no distinction between 'reality' and 'fantasy', intersperses the action with flashbacks and flashes forward, and admits only a few token gestures towards storytelling as such. The result is more evocative of the heyday of 'underground movies' like Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* than it is of the modern horror genre.

Much of the explanation for the film's idiosyncrasy can be found in its credits, which reveal that Tsukamoto made it virtually single-handed. He directed, produced, wrote, photographed, lit and designed it, as well as engineering the special effects and playing the fetishist. He drew his handful of collaborators from the areas of fringe theatre (Kei Fujiwara, who gets four credits, is a leading light in Juro Kara's Kara-Gumi theatre group) and rock music (long-suffering lead actor Tomoroh Taguchi fronts the band Bachikaburi), thereby cementing an alliance between his own work and other forms of 'youth culture'. But *Tetsuo* is essentially a one-man show, and its appearance adds Tsukamoto's name to the list of young independent film-makers who are making present-day Japanese cinema so vital. The title, incidentally, is a pun: 'Tetsuo' is a common Japanese name, but Tsukamoto has chosen to write it with two *kanji* that literally translate as 'iron' and 'male'.

Tony Rayns



New blend: Tomoroh Taguchi



Modest doom: Adrienne Shelly

Certificate

15

Distribution

Palace Pictures

Production CompaniesZenith (London)/
True Fiction Pictures
(New York)In association with
Film Four**Executive Producer**

Jerome Brownstein

Producer

Bruce Weiss

Production Co-ordinator

Ingrid Rudefors

Production Manager

A. Seymour Ruark

Location Manager

Bob Gosse

Assistant DirectorsTed Hope
Eddie Rosenstein
Richard Spector**Screenplay**

Hal Hartley

Director of Photography

Michael Spiller

Camera Operator

Michael Spiller

Editor

Nick Gomez

Production Designer

Dan Ouellette

Art Director

Julie Fabian

Scenic Artist

Christopher Woods

Music

Phillip Reed

Music Extract"Symphony No. 5 in
C Minor" by Ludwig
Van Beethoven**Songs**"Walk Away",
"Mess with Me"
by Hub Moore,
performed by The
Great Outdoors**Costume Design**

Claudia Brown

Wardrobe Supervisor

Elizabeth Jenyon

Make-up

Judy Chin

Sound Editor

Kate Sanford

Sound Recordist

Jeff Pullman

Production AssistantsLaurel Bridges
David Doernberg
Brian Gutherman
Heather McGowan
Alan Bruckner
Stunt Co-ordinator
Phil Nielsen**Cast**

Adrienne Shelly

Maria Coughlin

Martin Donovan

Matthew Slaughter

Merritt Nelson

Jean Coughlin

John MacKay

Jim Slaughter

Edie Falco

Peg Coughlin

Gary Sauer

Anthony

Matt Malloy

Ed

Suzanne Costollos

Rachel

Jeff Howard

Robert

Karen Sillas

Nurse Paine

Tom Thon

Deli Man

M. C. Bailey

Bruce

Patricia Sullivan

Ruark Boss

Marko Hunt

John Coughlin

John St James

Mr Santiago

Kathryn Mederos

Factory Woman

Bill Sage

John Bill

Julie Sukman

Biker Man

Robby Anderson

Joey Blech

Christopher Cooke

Diner Guy

Bea Delizio

Woman on Couch

Tamu Favarite

Salesgirl

Leo Gosse

Elizabeth Gouse

Grace Blech

Mildred Jones

Nurse

Pathena Parish

Factory Girl

Scott Robinson

Bartender

Nena Segal

Aunt Fay

Jean Kay Sifford

Lori

Pamela Stewart

Mrs Blech

9,514 feet

106 minutes

United Kingdom/USA 1990**Director: Hal Hartley**

When seventeen-year-old Maria Coughlin leaves home, telling her parents she has quit school and is pregnant, her father dies of shock. Her boyfriend, Anthony, rejects her and she goes to an abortion clinic for advice. At a television factory in the same town, moody electronics genius Matthew Slaughter has another row with his employers and returns home to be tormented by his irascible father. Wandering the streets, Maria meets a depressed housewife, Rachel, who gives her money for food; attempting to buy beer, Maria has to fight off a lecherous storekeeper. A baby is kidnapped, and Maria suspects Rachel. She meets Matthew in a derelict house; he shows her the grenade he habitually carries as a final solution, and then takes her home. His father returns next morning and drives them both out.

Matthew tries to get a job at an electrical repair shop, but is disqualified by his refusal to work on television sets. Finding consolation in a bar, he meets Peg, a divorced mother-of-two, who turns out to be Maria's sister. The two girls take him home to meet their mother, Jean, who accepts Maria back on condition that she does all the housework. Jean does not approve of Matthew but considers he might make a useful partner for Peg. Maria gets an assembly-line job, begins to educate herself from Matthew's books, and tries to trace Rachel and the missing baby. Matthew accompanies her on a visit to the abortion clinic and proposes marriage.

Matthew goes back to the factory, but the company's cynical policies soon make him angry again. His moods make Maria restless: she wants to return to school, and to escape from her mother's tyranny. Jean, determined to split them up, tricks Matthew into getting drunk and puts him in Peg's bed. Maria gets an abortion the next day. She also tracks down Rachel and her husband just after the baby has been returned: they are sad and unresponsive.

Matthew finally loses patience with his job and walks out. Maria tells him about the abortion and that she no longer wants to get married. Leaving her a last gift of a thesaurus, Matthew takes his grenade to the factory, causing instant panic. Maria follows him to find that the grenade has failed to explode in his grasp; she throws it away and it goes off. They stare at each other as the police take him into custody.

With his second feature, Hal Hartley continues most of the themes of his first, *The Unbelievable Truth*. Again, the story's central concern is the waif-like small-town

teenager incarnated by Adrienne Shelly as a stubborn-chinned, micro-skirted hard-bargainer, leafing intently through people like books and books like people. Again, the focus of her attention becomes an introvert with a violent past, a troublesome integrity, and an uncanny technical skill. Again, the threat of an explosive termination hangs over the drama, although the sense of nuclear doom has this time been reduced to the more modest scale of a hand-grenade.

Major issues are now more domestic than political, and this second chapter has switched from financial and career-move concerns to the more conventional – but also more acute – matters of marriage and parenthood. To abort or not to abort, this is Maria's question, and to answer it she contemplates a variety of examples. Her divorced sister has two (unseen) children and aborted a third. She tracks down a childless couple who have kidnapped a single-parent baby and disconsolately returned it after a few days. Logically, Maria kills her father at the start of the film and her unborn child at the end, leaving her free to put her glasses on in conscious assumption of scholarship while traffic lights suspended behind her indicate a clear road ahead.

The image is not quite so easy, however. Maria is watching Matthew watching her as the police car drives him off, and the rising music suggests a future of glowing loyalty. But Matthew, while unquestionably the loyal kind, has other, somewhat reactionary quirks: he is averse to television, has a thing about Beethoven, and gets his own way (a treat to watch) in bar-rooms. His main gift to Maria, who pronounces 'naive' not inappropriately as 'knave', is a thesaurus. Her main gift to him has been trust, illustrated with startling simplicity by her sudden backwards fall from a modest height in the certainty that he'll catch her. That they both, with their broken homes, have survived the grenade in order to start anew, is an implicit but unconvincing message, presumably available to Hartley to expand for his third chapter.

Continuing to favour a dead-pan delivery by his cast, Hartley has reduced the theatrical intrusiveness of his *Unbelievable Truth* style. Visually, *Trust* goes more for Bergmanesque confidentiality than Godardian colours, Michael Spiller's photography now applying itself to superbly lit close-ups against admirably simple backgrounds. Moody, morose, and perceptively absurd, *Trust* confirms that in refining his cinematic skills Hartley, at least, has undoubtedly found something to believe in.

Philip Strick

Certificate
18
Distributor
Palace Pictures
Production Company
Trimark
Executive Producer
Mark Amin
Producers
Dan Ireland
Ronaldo Vasconcellos
Line Producer
Michael D. Pariser
Production Executive
Joseph Akerman
Production Associate
Karen Dare
Production Co-ordinator
Sharon Morov
Unit Production Manager
Michael D. Pariser
Location Manager
Gerrit V. Folsom
Post-production Supervisor
Frederick Ireland
Casting
Linda Francis
Extras:
Bill Dance Casting
Assistant Directors
Aaron Barsky
Deborah A. Dell'Amico
Janet Van Etten
Robin Leigh Fleck
Screenplay
Ken Russell
Deborah Dalton
Based on the play
Bondage by David Hines
Director of Photography
Amir Mokri
In colour
Camera Operator
Alf Russell
Video Playback Operator
Steve Irwin
Editor
Brian Tagg
Production Designer
Richard Lewis
Art Director
Naomi Shohan
Set Decorator
Amy Wells
Set Dressers
David Hollen
Norman West
James Foley
Special Effects and Design
The Consortium
Sound Design Company
Music
Michael Gibbs
Music Extracts
"Pastoral Symphony"
Movements
2.5 by Ludwig Van Beethoven;
"Nutmacker Suite",
Arab Dance by Pyotr Tchaikovsky; "Night on the Bare Mountain" by Modest Mussorgsky
Music Supervisors
Kevin Benson
Donald Zuckerman
Music Editor
Brian Tagg
Songs
"Doing the Bang"
by P. Hero, H. Hero,
J. Spivey, T. Keith,
W. Frattacci,
performed by
Fascinating Force; "Let
Me Be Your Fantasy"
by E. Esquilon,
R. Ricardo, performed
by Girls Club; "Your
Love" by M. Moses,
performed by Sandie
Morgan; "Love
of Loves" by Frankie
Laine, Carl Fisher,
performed by Frankie
Laine; "The Castle
Beat" by L. Joseph,



Abstracted: Theresa Russell

performed by
Castlebeat; "Tell Me
All Your Secrets" by
J. Young, N. Vitello,
performed by Nerissa;
"This Man" by Bill
Kelly, "On the Border"
by Bill Kelly, John
Beebe, performed
by Bill Kelly & the
House of Cards;
"Selfish" by J. Wilson,
S. Grant, performed
by Velma Wright;
"The Bitch Better Have
My Money" by J. Lewis,
performed by AMG;
"A Girl's Gotta Do"
by and performed
by Bonnie Barnard
Costume Design
Leonard Pollack
Make-up
Theresa Russell:
Carlos David Amador
Key:
Ron Figuly Wild
Titles
GSE
Sound Editors
Nigel Galt
Dialogue:
Michael Hopkins
Additional:
Martin Crane
ADR Supervisors
US:
Craig Clarke
UK:
Clive Mitchison
Dolby stereo
Consultant:
Tim Partridge
Sound Re-recorder
Tom Brandau
Production Assistants
Vanessa G. Bardlaving
Tom Gianakopoulos
Scott Whitted
Eddie Fickett
Leslie Holden
Molly M. Mayeux
Stunt Co-ordinator
Jeff Smolek
Stunt Double
Dana Dru Evenson
Stand-ins
John Ostlund
Joyce Skibbe
Extracts
Shadows in the Storm
Mob Boss
Melanie Rose

Cast
Theresa Russell
Liz
Benjamin Mouton
Blake
Antonio Fargas
Rasta
Sanjay
Indian
Elizabeth Morehead
Katie
Michael Crabtree
Man in Car
John Diehl
Derelict
Robert O'Reilly
Young Man in Car
Charles Macauley
Older Man in Car
Jason Kristoffer
Shy Kid in Van
Jack Nance
Man Who Helps Liz
Frank Smith
Charlie
Gail McMullen
Nurse in Convalescent
Home
Bob Prupas
Maitre d'
Bobby Bruce
Violinist
Daniel Trejo
Tattoo artist
Jason Savcier
Bill
Amanda Goodwin
Liz's Girlfriend
Daniel Beer
Bill's Drinking Partner
Doug MacHugh
Man in Diner
Stephanie Blake
Stripper in Big T's
Barbara Eaton
Other Stripper
Daniel Quinn
Brutal Man
Alisa Christensen
Lady in Toilet
Ginger-Lynn Allen
Wounded Girl
Blanche Sindelar
Theatre Cashier
B. J. Ward
Theatre Manager
Scott David-King
Sean Fitzpatrick
Cops on Bikes
Lee Ahrenberg
Violent John in Car
Tom Villard
Hippy
John Carlyle
Shoe Fetish Man
Scott Harte
Chris
Barbara Mallory
Rachel
Joy Baggish
Flo, Older Whore
Jared Barclay
Dead Trick in Car

7,642 feet
85 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Ken Russell

● Venice, California. On the run from her sadistic pimp Blake, prostitute Liz is talking to the itinerant Rasta when she is picked up by two men in a limousine. After refusing to do a 'double', she is forced to fellate one of them and then dumped. Liz recalls a similar incident in which a seemingly innocent teenager lured her into a van, where a group of his friends gang-raped her and left her for dead. She was found by a kindly schoolteacher, who took her home and lent her money.

A moped-riding Indian, Sanjay, offers to double Liz's price to have intercourse without a condom; she refuses. Liz thinks of a favourite client, Charlie, a seventy-year-old with a love of gardening and a desire to be caned. Liz ducks into a strip club to avoid the prowling Blake. Seated at the bar, she remembers a humiliating 'romantic' evening in a chic restaurant with Blake, before she was tattooed with his brand and set to work. Thinking back further, Liz recalls her drunken ex-husband, Bill, her broken marriage, and her young son. Having left Bill and taken a job at a diner - her son being cared for by her mother - Liz slipped into having sex for money.

Liz is reminded of the night she found another of Blake's girls with her stomach slashed. Liz saved her but Blake killed the girl a few weeks later. Liz was helped on that occasion by Katie, a middle-class woman who befriended her and introduced her to literature and serious music, before Blake frightened her off. Blake catches up with Liz in a supermarket, threatens her, hits Rasta when he tries to intervene, and says he will be back in an hour for his money. While Rasta and Liz go to a cinema, Blake drives around in his Porsche, expounding his basic, entrepreneurial approach to prostitution.

Liz thinks back to the time when, following her mother's death, she had no one to mind her son and he was taken into care. Picked up by a man in an expensive convertible, Liz has energetic sex with him in an underground car park, during which he dies of a heart attack. Blake arrives, robs the client, breaks Liz's finger, and threatens to harm her son. But before he can continue beating her, Rasta slashes his throat with a piece of broken glass. Liz walks away smiling.

● *Whore* began life as *Bondage*, a forty-minute dramatic monologue written by London taxi driver David Hines, who based his play on meetings with, and stories told to him by, working prostitutes. In characteristic style, Ken Russell

opens his film version of this day-in-the-life account of street prostitution with a jaw-droppingly misogynist reggae song declaring "I Wanna Bang Her", a vomiting tramp, and the omnipresent Rasta (Antonio Fargas) with his penchant for walking on broken glass. En route to the screen, the play's locale has been changed from the King's Cross area to Venice, California, in order to secure American backing.

It is not only the locations that have been changed, however. In expanding a one-woman stage show into a full-length feature, Russell and co-writer Deborah Dalton have tried - with varying success - to create an objective vision of the squalid world evoked by Liz's angry, subjective and occasionally self-deluding monologues. This fleshing-out process was understandably difficult, and evidence of Russell and Dalton's failure to resolve the inherent problems is everywhere in evidence. Liz delivers her blunt diatribes directly to camera, a device which no doubt created an extra intimacy between performer and audience on stage, but which has the opposite, distancing effect here.

It does not help that Liz's coarse, no-holds-barred monologues are constantly being interrupted by different levels of past and present reality: these include explanations of her present, mildly suspenseful dilemma; flashback scenes which fill out her unhappy marital and maternal past; affectionate asides concerning some of her older, more sympathetic clients. Equally disorienting are the film's seedy backstreet locations, which are so desolate and devoid of human life - presumably because of the film's modest three-million-dollar budget - that together with Russell's forced primary colours they create an environment that is more abstract than naturalistic.

What should hold these disparate elements together is Theresa Russell's central performance. But despite much candid talk and some nice asides ("I've lost count of how many I've had. It must be miles"), her tone is more hectoring than harrowing. This is all the more surprising given the subtle and involving performance which director Sonda Locke elicited from her for the recent straight-to-video release *Impulse*, in which Russell played an emotionally damaged cop who moonlights as a decoy hooker for the vice squad. Ken Russell attacked the same subject matter far more successfully in his earlier *Crimes of Passion*, where his dissection of the fantasy images that men projected on to Kathleen Turner's classy hooker were satirised more cruelly, more consistently, and to far greater effect.

Nigel Floyd

Young Soul Rebels

Certificate
18
Distributor
BFI
Production Company
BFI
For Film Four
International
In association with
Sankofa Film & Video/
La Sept/Kinowelt/
Iberoamericana
Executive Producers
Colin MacCabe
Ben Gibson
Producer
Nadine Marsh-Edwards
Production Executive
Angela Topping
Production
Co-ordinator
Winnie Wishart
Production Manager
Joanna Beresford
Location Manager
Michael Kelk
Post-production
Co-ordinator
Eliza Mellor
Casting
Gilly Poole
Suzanne Crowley
Assistant Directors
Ian Ferguson
Peter Heslop
Stephen Robinson
2nd Unit:
Ian Hickinbotham
Bill Rudgard
Jonny Kurzman
John Withers
Steve Millson
Screenplay
Paul Hallam
Derrick Saldaan
McClintock
Isaac Julien
Director of Photography
Nina Kellgren
In colour
2nd Unit Photography
Steve Tickner
Mike Metcalf
Camera/Steadicam Operator
Andy Shuttleworth
Opticals
Studio 51
Editor
John Wilson
Production Designer
Derek Brown
Art Director
Debra Overton
Scenic Artists
Joanna Craze
Annie Lapaz
Storyboard Artist
John Hewitt
Special Effects
Any Effects
Special FX Supervisor
Tom Harris
Music
Simon Boswell
Music Supervisors
Bonnie Greenberg
Ian P. Hierons
Jill Meyers
Songs
"P. Funk Wants to Get Funked Up" performed by Parliament;
"Rock Creek Park", "Time Is Moving On" performed by The Blackbirds; "I Like It" performed by The Players Association; "Let's Get It Together" performed by El Coco; "Say You Will" performed by Eddie Henderson; "One Nation Under a Groove" performed by Funkadelic;



Unmoved: Valentine Nonyela, Mo Sesay

"I'll Play the Fool for You" performed by Dr Buzzard; "You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)" performed by Sylvester; "Let the Music Play" performed by Charles Earland; "Identity", "Oh Bondage Up Yours" performed by X-Ray Spex; "Running Away" performed by Roy Ayers; "Party Time" performed by The Heptones; "Cocaine" performed by Sly and the Revolutionaries; "Me and My Baby Brother" performed by War; "Police and Thieves" performed by Junior Murvin; "Message in Our Music" performed by The O'Jays; "Young Soul Rebels" performed by Mica Paris
Choreographer
Foster George
Costume Design
Annie Curtis Jones
Wardrobe Supervisor
Caroline Pitcher
Master:
Anthony Black
Mistress:
Lisa M. Johnson
Costume Advisers
Joey Attawlia
Debbie Little
Make-up Artist
Yvonne Coppard
Titles
Neville Brody
Frameline
Sound Editor
Zane Hayward
Dialogue Editor
Patrick O'Neill
ADR Editor
Shirley Shaw
Sound Recordists
Ronald Bailey
2nd Unit:
Martine Couche
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordist
Aad Wirtz
Sound Effects
Additional:
Steve Farrer
Nigel Heath
Music:
Simon Fisher Turner
Marvin Black
Foley Artist
Jack Stew
Technical Supervisor
Andy Powell
Stunt Co-ordinator
Clive Curtis
Stunts
Stuart Clark
Antoni Garfield-Henry
Nick Gillard
Tim Lawrence
Gareth Milne
Mark Anthony Newman

Cast
Valentine Nonyela
Chris
Mo Sesay
Caz
Dorian Healy
Ken
Frances Barber
Ann
Sophie Okonedo
Tracy
Jason Durr
Billibud
Gary McDonald
Davis
Debra Gillet
Jill
Eamon Walker
Carlton
James Bowyers
Sparky
Billy Braham
Kelly
Wayne Norman
Biggy
Danielle Scillitoe
Trish
Ray Shell
Jeff Kane
Nigel Harrison
CID Man
John Wilson
Park Policeman
Brian Conway
Mike Mungarvan
Policemen
Sayan Akaddas
Asian Punk Girl
Shyro Chung
TJ
Adam Price
Bouncer
Michael Mascoll
Freddie Brooks
Soul Boys
Rodriguez King-Dorset
Irvine
Lloyd Anderson
Barber
Adam Stuart
Astley Harvey
Men in Barber Shop
Peter Harding
Radio Producer
Richard Jamieson
Football Supporter
Mark Brett
Stallkeeper
Joan Harsant
Blue Rinse Woman
Verona Marshall
Frankie Palma
Trish's Friends

9,409 feet
105 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Director: Isaac Julien

1977, during the week of the Queen's Silver Jubilee. Chris and Caz, close friends since childhood, are disc jockeys on a black pirate radio station called Soul Patrol, which broadcasts its 'funk' message from an East End garage. They are shocked by the death of their friend TJ, who has been murdered while cruising the park by night, and Chris realises that a ghetto blaster found in the park by his little sister contains a recording of the killer's voice.

Police investigating the murder visit the garage and question its owners, Davis and Carlton. Chris meanwhile talks his way into a commercial station, Metro Radio, where he is refused a job but meets Tracy, a production assistant. He invites her that night to The Crypt, a club where the Soul Patrol are featured. The club turns out to be packed with black and white, gays and straight, and soul boys who are soon at loggerheads with the local punks. Caz is disapproving of Tracy, whom he sees as interfering with Chris' commitment to Soul Patrol. Caz himself is attracted to a punk, Billibud, and when the Soul Patrol duo split up at the end of the evening, Chris leaves with Tracy and Caz later meets Billibud in the park.

While they are installing a new aerial for the station, supplied by a white friend, Ken, Chris and Caz quarrel bitterly. Caz starts working with Billibud and their relationship develops into a sexual one, as does Chris' with Tracy. The police then arrest Chris for TJ's murder. He is released with Tracy's help, but the Soul Patrol station is broken into and vandalised: the murderer, clearly, is aware of the evidence on the tape. Afraid now for his life, Chris feels the absence of Caz. At a "Stuff the Jubilee" concert in the park, Caz and Billibud are setting up their equipment when the arrival of National Front supporters results in a riot. Amidst the fire and violence, Caz and Chris finally confront and fight with TJ's murderer, Ken. The two friends are reunited and Soul Patrol resumes the air.

Young Soul Rebels is a coming-of-age story in several ways. It is a sex and soul movie, set at the time of their emergence from the punk rebellion nearly a decade and a half ago (the formative cultural experience for co-writer/director Isaac Julien and producer Nadine Marsh-Edwards). Primarily, it's about the growing up of the Soul Patrol duo Caz and Chris (newcomers Mo Sesay and Valentine Nonyela) who have to sort out their loyalties to

their music, their sexual partners and each other.

But with *Young Soul Rebels*, the 70s as a period might also be said to be growing up. Until now, it has been a little too close for historical revival, unlike the flower-power 60s. Here the Jubilee Year is thoroughly evoked, not just through the rich soundtrack – ranging from punk X-Ray Spex to funk Parliament – but in the dance steps, clubs, clothes, cars, graffiti and cardboard cut-outs of the waving Queen. Chris and Caz are the rebels within the punk rebellion. *Young Soul Rebels* goes against the accepted versions of those times to bring out their contradictions: not just National Front skinheads vs. Rock Against Racism, culture vs. politics, patriotism vs. No Future anarchism. *Young Soul Rebels* explores with great conviction the Soul which was at the heart of punk, and which was musically just as influential.

The other 'alternative' that Julien explores is the gay scene: what happens in the park after dark once the familiar is safely tucked up in bed. At the centre of the film are the choices between light and dark, straight and gay, Chris and Caz. Chris' lack of success with the mainstream Metro Radio does not prevent his falling for Tracy, the black station PA; Caz decides that the way forward for Soul Patrol is a gig in the park and ends up falling for the white punk Billibud.

But after the sexual tenderness and ravishing style of Julien's *Looking for Langston*, the sensuality here is tepid. A rooftop scene is a lame setting for the encounter between Chris and Tracy, and the gay sex of Caz and Billibud is rather awkward mutual masturbation to Sylvester's "You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)". This would have meant more had there been as much soul in their emotional expression as in the soundtrack.

The intensity of these questions also does not entirely translate into the plot. Although the film opens with the murder mystery of TJ's death, finding his killer does not help to pin down the complexities the film raises. Until Chris' panic at being framed for it, the emotional implications of TJ's murder are limited by the speed with which his mates appear to forget him. Caz does show us something of why black men go with white men, but *Young Soul Rebels* doesn't say very much about why a white gay man should murder a black one. The climactic riot in the park, and the happy coda of Chris and Caz happily 'funking' with their respective partners, fail to carry through on the energies and emotions that *Young Soul Rebels* has taken such care and imagination to create.

Julian Henriques

Reviews

Where
Young Soul Rebels



Andy Garcia: politics of disengagement...

Distributor
Channel 4
Production Company
Roulette Productions
For British
Screen/Film Four
International/
Mandemar
Executive Producer
Verity Lambert
Producer
Graham Easton
Production
Co-ordinator
Cate Arbeid
Production Manager
Laura Julien
Location Manager
Howard Gibbins
Casting
Sheila Trezise
Assistant Directors
Gino Marotta
Paul Lowin
Screenplay
Maurice Hatton
Carlos' poetry from
Selected Poems by
Pablo Neruda
Director of
Photography
Tony Iml
In colour
Camera Operator
John Campbell
Editor
Barry Peters
Production Designer
Austen Spriggs

Art Director
Peta Button
Special Effects
Terry Glass
Music
Mike Gibbs
Costume Design
Louise Stjernsward
Wardrobe
Supervisor
Brian Cox
Make-up
Magdalen Gaffney
Sound Editor
Graham Harris
Sound Recordists
David Crozier
John Midgeley
Sound Re-recordists
Supervisor:
Bill Rowe
Ray Merrin

Cast
Andy Garcia
Carlos Quintas
Kitty Aldridge
Kate
Al Matthews
Morrisey
Alfredo Michelsen
Ramon
Robert Stephens
Screech
Guy Bertrand
Ruben
Ricardo Sibelo
Miguel
Lino Omoboni
Alfonso
Ben Onwukwe
Hi-jacked Van Driver
Peter Guinness
Policeman
Sheila Burrell
Raul's Neighbour
Carola Palacios
Inez
Adolpho Cozzi
Paco
Gloria Romo
Raul's Widow
Yves Aubert
Reporter at ICA
Juanita Waterman
Zoe
Kate McKenzie
Ms van Doorn
Christopher Rozycki
Vladimir
Boris Isarov
Nickolai
Rosalind Bennett
Pickwick
Jayne Irving
TV Interviewer
Yolande Vasquez
Isabella
Darcy Flynn
American TV Reporter
Sayo Inaba
Japanese Reporter
Steve Weston
Ricks
Mike Mungarvan
Embassy Policeman
Francisco Morales
Embassy Official
Christopher Logue
Susannah York
Mel Calman
Themselves

9,180 feet
102 minutes

United Kingdom 1988

Director: Maurice Hatton

Carlos Quintas is a South American poet living in London. A military junta has ousted democracy in his (unnamed) homeland, and the resistance movement – little more than a handful of activists, led by Ramon – have persuaded Carlos to serve a figurehead role as president-in-exile. The movement has been warned that Carlos is being trailed by a death squad, and an English sympathiser, Kate, is assigned to help him. Carlos is attracted to her, but she keeps their relationship on a professional footing.

The pair barely escape a fire bomb in what was supposed to be a safehouse, and Carlos has to be dissuaded from resigning by Ramon, who has learned of a document that will embarrass the British government and the military junta. But the source insists that Carlos collect the proof in person. Meanwhile, Kate is approached by Screech, a British Intelligence agent, who advises caution. Soviet emissaries also intercept the president-in-exile, with an unofficial offer of financial help. Carlos collects the confidential evidence, dubbed the "Pickwick Papers", which implicate Downing Street with the junta in a cover-up involving the disappearance of two British nuns.

An American offer comes from Morrisey, who claims to represent a new publishing firm and offers Carlos a \$300,000 advance for his next book, if he relinquishes all other commitments. The Pickwick Papers are made public; the Soviet and American approaches become more urgent, as do the attentions of the death squad. An assassination attempt leaves Carlos with a flesh wound and renewed faith in the cause. He rejects Morrisey's offer and discharges himself from hospital.

The British government now wants to deport him, but the death squad – trailing Kate – find him first. With Morrisey's help, Kate rescues Carlos from his embassy captors and their deadly game of American

Roulette. It transpires that a coup has taken place back home to reinstate democracy, and Carlos is asked to become the caretaker government's leader. At Kate's urging, he accepts, and flies off with Ramon.

In his self-deprecating 1979 quasi-documentary, *Long Shot*, Maurice Hatton concocted an amusing British independent film about the impossibility of British independent cinema. With its commercially trans-Atlantic title, star and genre formula, *American Roulette* is a sad confirmation of the joke. Produced in 1988, the film was intended for theatrical distribution, but three years later receives its British premiere on C4 television. An unhappily botched thriller, it's as conventional as any of the Hollywood pictures of Hatton's former 60s partner, John Irvin, though not as accomplished in terms of story-telling.

Even allowing for the usual confusions of political intrigue, Hatton's development is unaccountably wayward. Kate's role is never properly explained, nor her relationship with Ramon. Why do the death squad content themselves with snapshots of Carlos when they could be shooting lead? How does Kate know where they are holding Carlos prisoner, and why does she turn to the CIA man, Morrisey, for help? (Hatton's indulgent attitude to the CIA and British Intelligence, in the chummy person of Robert Stephens, is itself a surprise.) And finally, how fortunate that a friendly coup should resolve these entanglements at the fade-out.

The set-pieces are similarly confused. A sequence of evasive tube-hopping is quite inexplicably prolonged, while an escape from a crowded auction room adamantly doesn't recall Hitchcock. The film has more than its fair share of embarrassing dialogue, but precious little sense of the real exigencies of international politics. Purporting to address political commitment and moral dilemma, Hatton has produced something curiously ambivalent and disengaged.

Tom Charity



... and confusion (Kitty Aldridge, Andy Garcia)

Bearskin – An Urban Fairytale



Space for play: Tom Waits, Julia Britton, Damon Lowry

Distributor
Channel 4
Production Company
Cinema Action
For Film Four
International/
British Screen
With financial
assistance from
Instituto Português
de Cinema, Radio
Televisão Portuguesa
Producers
Eduardo Guedes
Leontine Ruelle
Production
Co-ordinator
Diane Chittell
Production Manager
Alison Barnett
Location Manager
Peter Tullo
Post-production
Co-ordinator
Britt Harrison
Casting
Marilyn Johnson
Assistant Directors
Ray Corbett
Andrew Wood
Marcus Catlin
Screenplay
Ann Guedes
Eduardo Guedes
Director of
Photography
Michael Coulter
In colour
Camera Operator
Nigel Willoughby
Editor
Edward Marnier
Art Directors
Jack Scott
Luis Monteiro
Scenic Artist
Ted Mitchell
Special Effects
Supervisor
Arthur Beavis
Music
Michael McEvoy
Song
"Singapore" by and
performed by
Tom Waits
Costume Design
Michael Jeffery
Wardrobe
Jenny Hawkins
Bearskin Costume:
Alice Power
Make-up
Sula Loizon
Sound Editor
Shirley Shaw
Sound Recordist
Joaquim Pinto
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordist
Peter Maxwell
Footsteps Editor
Gordon Brown
Punch & Judy
Consultant
John Styles
Stunt Arranger
Tip Tipping

Cast
Tom Waits
Silva
Damon Lowry
Johnny Fortune
Charlotte Coleman
Kate
Julia Britton
Laura
Bill Paterson
Jordan
Isabel Ruth
Mrs J
Ian Dury
Charlie
Alex Norton
Harold
Mark Arden
George
Pip Torrens
Gold-cufflinks
David Gant
Broker
Karl Collins
Edison
Russell Lee
Mite
Phil Atkinson
Bouncer
Tom Thompson
Performer
Glyn Grimstead
Robert Warner
Policemen
Joe Abdo
Stockbroker
Arthur Whybrow
Captain

8,550 feet
95 minutes

United Kingdom 1990

**Directors: Ann Guedes,
Eduardo Guedes**

TV Bounced from a snooker hall for card-gambling, Johnny Fortune quarrels with his girlfriend Kate over losing – and then stealing back – her money. A helpful old tramp, Jordan, shows him a newspaper advertisement for a pub job; though the paper turns out to be a year old, it does lead him to Mrs J, a theatrical costumier who is winding up her business. She gives Johnny a live-in job, which allows him to avoid two violent debt collectors, Harold and George. He falls in with a carefree young American, Silva, and his silent English girlfriend, Laura, who run a children's Punch and Judy show, around which Johnny clowns in a bearskin.

During a trivial brush with police, Silva poses as a passer-by, and asks Johnny to be circumspect with Mrs J. While chatting with her, Johnny lets slip the word 'Punch', but then pretends that his friend is a boxer. Harold and George wreck the snooker hall and rape Kate; Johnny is saved when Jordan reappears like a guardian angel and volunteers to play the decoy. Kate, traumatised, rejects Johnny. Broker, an enigmatic nark, hints to Mrs J that she might get her daughter back, in return for information about an American boxer who absconded from his promoters, after faking his own death in a gymnasium fire. Mrs J fingers Silva, but the wordplay on 'punch' provokes Broker's disbelief. Silva decides to disappear, urging Laura to settle down with Johnny, but is shot during a performance.

Harold and George chain Johnny in his bearskin and drag him into a disco where he is subjected to increasingly spiteful horseplay. Laura rescues him and nurses him in a cemetery of old aeroplanes, though Harold and George resume their pursuit. Laura appeals to Mrs J – in fact her mother – but refuses to apologise for something unstated. After being slapped, she wrecks the warehouse display. Silva reappears, having only faked his own death, and though the debt collectors fire at the fleeing bear, its headpiece rolls off empty. In a Punch and Judy show's final scene, the indomitable puppet, as usual, beats the devil...

Bearskin is the second attempt, after *Rocinante*, at a dramatic (art-house/TV) fiction by the radical documentary group Cinema Action. The basic storyline is a hardy perennial: a prole on the run, through a milieu half-lumpen, half-poetic, from a network of crooks who suggest some hidden structure deeply infesting society. Broadly similar patterns go back through

Hollywood noir and French poetic realism; important English variants include *Performance*, *Gumshoe* and Chris Petit's *Radio On*. The latter tuned in to UB40 moods, and subordinated noir thicket to a depressed social lyricism. Mike Figgis' *Stormy Monday* re-emphasised noir formula over realist detail.

Bearskin comes somewhere between Petit's intimism and Figgis' thicket, adding neo-romantic trimmings like the warehouseful of fancy dress. All three films modify noir formulae to express British economic decline. Both here and in Figgis' film, a confused drifter comes up against brutal American capitalists reaching deep into England to reclaim an American fugitive. *Bearskin* stresses their English lackeys: a plummy-voiced Establishment type, a debt collector in yuppie-type collar and tie, and a nark. The sadly snookered prole is helped by non-cohesive sub-cultures: the traditional-folkish street theatre and the theatrical warehouse, whose costumes, props and disguises suggest a structured space for the free play of the imagination.

But this 'resistance' is dislocated by limiting individualisms and communication difficulties: Kate, a forceful character, withdraws into inertness; Mrs J and Laura are locked in family hatred. Kate's four-letter words evoke the limitations of proletarian language; Laura's long, benign, therapeutic silences go with a refusal to speak the words commanded by her mother (R. D. Laing). Johnny's bearskin is disguise but not expression. Disguise, decoys and wordplays develop the theme. The whole poetic-symbolic structure suggests a romantic-radical paradigm about some private, or folk, imagination which, though never abolished by the system (Silva escapes, Punch fights on), never prevails against it.

But the shortfall of *Bearskin* may be indicated by comparison with *Letter to Brezhnev*, whose surface detail is stingingly vivacious and formula-free from start to finish (albeit its basic thesis hardly bears comment, after Gorbachev's begging letters to Mrs Thatcher!). In *Bearskin*, such vivacity repeatedly stirs only to be aborted by the crashingly obvious goodies and baddies, the clumsy mysteriousness foreshortening the drama, the inconsequential flat-on psychology all round, and a sense of 'painting from numbers' out of pre-existing formulae. Ian Dury remains a character in search of a screen role; Waits' acting voice is as charmless as his end-credits song is beautiful. The updated 'dialogue' for Punch and Judy is inspired, but overall *Bearskin* is routine 'oppositional' schmaltz.

Raymond Durnat

Video

William Green reviews every retail/retail premiere video and Mark Kermode every rental/rental premiere video released this month

★ Highlights

Reviews in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (MFB) and *Sight and Sound* are cited in parentheses

Rental

Buddy's Song

FoxVideo 3247

UK 1990

Certificate PG

Director Claude Whatham

★ Hugely underrated kid's film starring pop star Chesney Hawkes as the son of a loveable jailbird (Roger Daltrey). The film presents an impressively authentic portrayal of life in a naff rock band. (MFB No. 686)

Crazy People

CIC VHB 2492

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Tony Bill Dudley Moore in a lacklustre comedy about an advertising executive who is locked away for wanting to tell the truth. Daryl Hannah co-stars. (MFB No. 680)

Cyrano de Bergerac

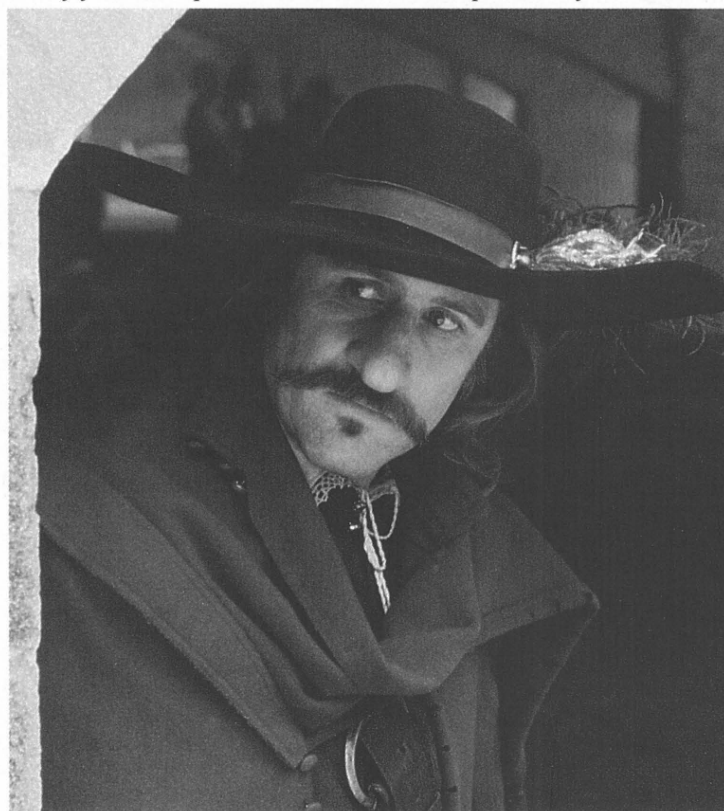
Artificial Eye ART 900

France 1990

Certificate U

Director Jean-Paul Rappeneau

★ Rappeneau's adaptation of Edmond Rostand's play is a bitter-sweet joy. Gérard Depardieu is terrific



Cyrano, and French, to a fault: Gérard Depardieu



Redefining the gangster: John Turturro in 'Miller's Crossing'

as the eponymous big-nose, and the climax will have you weeping so uncontrollably that you'll have to watch *Roxanne* to recover. Subtitles (MFB No. 684)

The First Power

MGM/UA Warner 54236

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Robert Resnikoff Lou Diamond Phillips is miscast as a detective on the trail of a reincarnated slasher. Thematic continuity is sacrificed to endless punch-ups. (MFB No. 681)

Miller's Crossing

FoxVideo 3247

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Joel Coen

★ An astonishing tale of the ethics of friendship and betrayal which

redefines the gangster movie.

Direction is razor sharp, and Gabriel Byrne's portrayal of a man surviving one battering after another is sublime. The best genre picture of last year. (MFB No. 685)

Rocky V

MGM/UA Warner 99727

USA 1990

Certificate PG Director John G. Avildsen Rocky regains his much-missed underdog status as he returns, bankrupted, to his old Philadelphia neighbourhood. An interesting conclusion to the Rocky series. (MFB No. 685)

The Russia House

MGM/UA Warner 54328

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Fred Schepisi Sean Connery, Michelle Pfeiffer, Roy Scheider and James Fox are among the stars in this plodding but scenic adaptation of John Le Carré's bestselling spy novel. (MFB No. 686)

Staying Together

20:20 Vision NVT 11637

USA 1989

Certificate 15 Director Lee Grant

Three brothers come of age when their father sells the restaurant which is their life. Unexceptional rites-of-passage movie, lifted by Sean Austin's performance. (MFB No. 683)

Rental premiere

Absolute Strangers

First Independent VA 20132

USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Gilbert Cates Producer Denis Dotty Screenplay Robert Anderson Photography Mark Irwin

Music Charles Fox **Lead Actors** Henry Winkler, Jennifer Hetrick, Karl Malden, Audra Lindley 89 minutes
★ The extremely talented Winkler leads a TV melodrama based on the real-life case of Marty Klein, who attempted to have his comatose wife's foetus aborted. Schmaltz abounds, but the story is gripping and the issues raised uncomfortable.

The Big Slice

RCA/Columbia CVT 13266
USA 1990

Certificate 15 **Director** John Bradshaw **Producer** Nicolas Stiliadas **Screenplay** John Bradshaw **Lead Actors** Casey Siemaszko, Leslie Hope, Heather Locklear 94 minutes
The promising Siemaszko (of *Breaking In* fame) fails to salvage this dreary comedy of two aspiring authors.

Blood Games

RCA/Columbia CVT 12867
USA 1990

Certificate 18 **Director** Tanya Rosenberg **Producer** Yakov Bentsvi **Screenplay** Craig L. Clyde, James L. Hennessy, George P. Saunders. **Lead Actors** Gregory Cummings, Laura Albert, Shelly Abblett 87 minutes
An all-female baseball team face vicious retribution after defeating some men at their favourite game.

Blood Red

RCA/Columbia CVT 11646
USA 1988

Certificate 15 **Director** Peter Masterson **Producers** Judd Bernard, Patricia Casey **Screenplay** Ron Cutler **Lead Actors** Dennis Hopper, Eric Roberts, Giancarlo Giannini, Julia Roberts 87 minutes
Rehashing the well-worn themes of the Jesse James legend, Masterson's unmemorable Western fires off in many different directions with diffuse results.

Deadly Desire

CIC VHB 2511
USA 1990

Certificate 15 **Director** Charles Correll **Producer** Vanessa Greene **Screenplay** Jerry Ludwig, Tobi Ludwig **Lead Actors** Jack Scalia, Kathryn Harold, Will Patton, Joe Santos 89 minutes
★ A security guard's affair with his fiery charge leads to murder. Multiple plot twists, nifty direction, and a nicely nasty performance from Patton enliven this pleasantly contrived *Body Heat* romp.

Fight for Freedom

Genesis/Excalibur EXC 0011
USA 1990

Certificate PG **Director** John Korty **Producer** David Rosemont **Screenplay**

Jane-Howard Hammerstein **Lead Actors** Mark Harmon, Lee Purcell, Morgan Weisser, Leon Russom 91 minutes
Quirky and unexpected drama set in 1938 about famished farm workers organising to fight oppression.

Flight of the Intruder

CIC VHB 2513
USA 1990

Certificate 15 **Director** John Milius **Producer** Mace Neufeld **Screenplay** Robert Dillon, David Shaber **Lead Actors** Danny Glover, Willem Dafoe, Brad Johnson 120 minutes
Objectionable Vietnam action-pic about gung-ho American pilots flying illegal missions into Hanoi.

Frankenstein General Hospital

MCEG Virgin Vision MVP 891
USA 1988

Certificate 15 **Director** Deborah Roberts **Producer** Dimitri Villard **Screenplay** Michael Kelly, Robert Deel **Lead Actors** Mark Blankfield, Leslie Jordan, Irwin Keyes 87 minutes
Hotch-potch horror parody a long way from Mary Shelley and resembling a cross between *Young Frankenstein* and *Repossessed*.

Going Under

Warner PEV 12050
USA 1990

Certificate PG **Director** Mark W. Travis **Producer** Fred T. Gallo **Screenplay** Darryl Zarubica **Lead Actors** Bill Pullman, Ned Beatty, Wendy Schaal 77 minutes
With a claustrophobia-prone captain, and manned by a crew of halfwits, the US Sub Standard is sent off to start a war with Russia. Limp rip-off of *Airplane!* with damp-squib humour.

Heaven Tonight

First Independent VA 20133
Australia 1990

Certificate 15 **Director** Pino Amenta **Producer/Screenplay** Frank Howson **Lead Actors** John Waters, Kim Gungell, Rebecca Gilling, Sean Cully, Guy Pearce 93 minutes
★ Surprisingly convincing tale of an ex-rock star's struggle to resign himself to obscurity while his son's singing career flourishes.

H.E.L.P.

CIC VHA 1492
USA 1990

Certificate PG **Director** E. W. Swackhammer **Executive Producers** Dick Wolf, Christopher Crowe **Screenplay** David Black **Lead Actors** Tom Breznahan, Lance Edwards, Kim Flowers, Marjorie Monahan 91 minutes
Two episodes culled from a US TV



Alice, in an incredible shrinking world

series in which the Harlem Eastside Lifesaving Program saves New Yorkers from various perils. Presumably released to cash in on the buzz from *Backdraft*.

In the Line of Duty II – Blood Brothers

Genesis/Excalibur EXC 0012
USA 1990

Certificate 15 **Director/Producer** Dick Lowry **Screenplay** Philip Rosenberg **Lead Actors** James Farentino, Stephen Weber, Susan Walters, Harold Sylvester, Charles Haid 92 minutes
Lowry's sequel to the minor '89 video hit offers more of the same as a team of drug-busters take on evil king-pin Mario, with fatal consequences.

In the Spirit

Warner 12210
USA 1990

Certificate 18 **Director** Sandra Seacat **Producers** Julian Schlossbergm, Beverly Irby **Screenplay** Jeannie Berlin **Lead Actors** Jeannie Berlin, Melanie Griffith, Olympia Dukakis 91 minutes
★ Sprightly comedy-thriller which finds two women pursued by (and pursuing) the killer of a prostitute. An incisive script by Jeannie Berlin (Elaine May's daughter).

Prison Stories: Women on the Inside

Warner 25014
USA 1991

Certificate 15 **Directors** Penelope Spheeris, Donna Dietch, Joan Micklin Silver **Producer** Gerald T. Olson **Screenplay** Julie Selbo, Martin Jones, Dick Beebe, Marlene Meyer **Lead Actors** Rae Dawn Chong, Annabella Sciorra, Rachel Ticotin, Lolita Davidovich
★ Three women directors provide populist but unexploitative segments for this TV package. Dwelling on social issues rather than melodramatic inanities, this is effective mainstream entertainment with a message.

Scissors

First Independent VA 20134
USA 1990

Certificate 18 **Director** Frank de Felita **Producers** Mel Pearle, Don Levin, Hal W. Polaire **Screenplay** Frank de Felita, based on the story by Joyce Selznick **Photography** Anthony B. Richmond **Music** Alfi Kabiljo **Lead Actors** Sharon Stone, Steve Railsback, Michelle Phillips, Ronny Cox 90 minutes
Novelist de Felita (author of *Audrey Rose*) directs with flashy stylishness, but the result suffers from a nonsensical narrative – an attractive woman is haunted by a scissor-related incident from her past. Stone overacts wildly, and the general tone is hysterical.

Silhouette

CIC VHA 1499
USA 1990

Certificate 15 **Director** Carl Schenkel **Executive Producers** John Davis, Andrew Hill, Faye Dunaway **Screenplay** Jay Wolf, Victor Buell **Lead Actors** Faye Dunaway, John Terry, David Rasche 84 minutes
An architect sees a murder in silhouette and becomes the killer's prey. David Rasche steals the show as the hard-faced sheriff, while Dunaway is reliable as ever, but the multiple dénouements are hardly startling.

Vigilante Cop

ITC 9161
USA 1991

Certificate 15 **Director** Mel Damski **Producer** Harvey Kahn **Screenplay** Garry Michael White, Joseph Gunn **Lead Actors** Alex McArthur, Dale Midkiff, Terry O'Quinn 95 minutes
★ Star of Friedkin's riveting *Rampage*, Alex McArthur turns in another nicely psychotic role. Two cops – one nice, one nasty – come into conflict over their professional methods while fighting crime on the streets of San Antonio. Lively stuff.

Retail

Accattone

Connoisseur CR 041

Italy 1961 Price £14.99

Certificate 15

Director Pier Paolo Pasolini

★ Using a cast of mainly non-professionals, Pasolini paints a depressing portrait of a young pimp in the Roman slums. The brutal realism of the film, which caused moral outrage when first released, still holds great power. Subtitles (MFB No. 345)

Alice

ReVision MJ 011

Switzerland 1988

Certificate PG Director Jan Švankmajer

★ Czech surrealist Švankmajer weaves a wonderful nightmare based on the Lewis Carroll story. Alice (the only human in the film) chases a decidedly sinister, sawdust-oozing white rabbit into a subterranean world full of menace. (MFB No. 658)

Ay! Carmela (¡Ay, Carmela!)

Palace PVC 22175

Spain/Italy 1990 Price £14.99

Certificate 12 Director Carlos Saura

★ A trio of vaudevillians during the Spanish Civil War are forced to adapt their act for the Fascists. Saura's film, starring Carmen Maura, points out the vanity of trying to subsume art to politics, or politics to art. (S&S May 1991)

Before the Revolution (Prima della rivoluzione)

Connoisseur CR 040

Italy 1964 Price £14.99

Certificate 15

Director Bernardo Bertolucci

★ Following Stendhal's *The Charterhouse of Parma*, bourgeois ideals are challenged when a young man has to choose between his upper-middle class milieu and his Marxist sympathies. Subtitles (MFB No. 423)

Charles Bronson Collection

Cannon/Warner

Price £10.20 each

Assassination

PES 54251 USA 1986 (MFB No. 643)

Certificate 15 Director Peter Hunt

Murphy's Law

PES 54253 USA 1986 (MFB No. 633)

Certificate 18 Director J. Lee Thompson

Death Wish 4

PES 50011 USA 1987 (MFB No. 651)

Certificate 18 Director J. Lee Thompson

Messenger of Death

PES 31095 USA 1988

Certificate 18 Director J. Lee Thompson

Producer Pancho Kohner Screenplay

Paul Jarrico, based on the novel

Avenging Angel by Rex Burns

Photography Gideon Porath Music

Robert O. Ragland Lead Actors Charles

Bronson, Trish Van Devere, Laurence

Luckinbill 87 minutes

Kinjite

PES 31036 USA 1989

Certificate 18 Director J. Lee Thompson

Producer Pancho Kohner Screenplay

Harold Nebenzal Photography Gideon

Porath Music Greg Debelles Lead

Actors Charles Bronson, Perry Lopez,

James Pax, Peggy Lipton 94 minutes

Tough guy Charles Bronson is seventy

this year and is still doggedly

blowing riff-raff off the streets.

Assassination is the odd film out –

Bronson plays a secret agent hired

to protect the President's wife.

Consuming Passions

First Fun VA 30156

UK/USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 Director Giles Foster

Jonathan Pryce as a confectionery

firm manager who turns out cadaver

creams while also feeding Vanessa

Redgrave's insatiable appetite for

company. (MFB No. 658)

Dark Eyes (Oci ciornie)

Connoisseur CR 038

Italy 1987 Price £14.99

Certificate PG

Director Nikita Mikhalkov

Marcello Mastroianni's self-

deprecating charm and the glorious

settings of resort hotels and spa

towns save this Chekhov-based

costume whimsy. Subtitles

(MFB No. 655)

The Delinquents

Warner PES 12009

Australia 1989 Price £10.20

Certificate 15 Director Chris Thomson

Kylie Minogue's film debut could

have been worse – it might have

co-starred Jason Donovan. Instead

Kylie is led astray by Charlie

Schlatter against the backdrop of

the prudish 50s. (MFB No. 674)

Driving Miss Daisy

Warner PES 11931

USA 1989 Price £10.20

Certificate U Director Bruce Beresford

A Southern gentlewoman takes

twenty years to learn to appreciate

the company of her black chauffeur.

Jessica Tandy and Morgan Freeman

soft-pedal the emotions with easy

skill. (MFB No. 674)

18 Again!

New World/High Fliers SNW 1003

USA 1988 Price £10.00

Certificate PG Director Paul Flaherty

Charlie Schlatter is recruited to do

jerky impressions of George Burns living a new-found youth in this tedious age-swap story. (MFB No. 658)

The Garden

Artificial Eye ART 006

UK 1990 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Derek Jarman

★ An avant-garde masterpiece,

described by Jarman as a tapestry of

moods. Christian imagery is woven

into dream sequences that reflect on

the Church and its attitudes towards

homosexuality. (MFB No. 684)

Golden Braid

Artificial Eye ART 005

Australia 1990 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Paul Cox

★ An intriguing study in solipsism

involving a clockmaker who becomes

obsessed by a lock of hair. The bizarre

tragi-comic story combined with

Cox's experimental film style makes

this a fascinating film. (MFB No. 687)

The Hairdresser's Husband

(Le Mari de la coiffeuse)

Palace PVC 22075

France 1990 Price £14.99

Certificate 15 Director Patrice Leconte

★ Sympathetic portrayal of lonely

Jean Rochefort's sexual obsession

with hairdressers. The camera,

equally lovestruck, seldom strays

from the salon. Subtitles

(S&S June 1991)

King Kong

Polygram 083 3825

USA 1976 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director John Guillermin

Dino De Laurentiis' remake is good

on special effects but fails to match

the grandeur of the original.

(MFB No. 517)

The Lighthorsemen

Polygram/Medusa MED 11862

Australia 1987 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Simon Wincer

Not quite *Gallipoli* – but the same

subject of the Australian expedition

against the Turks in 1917 is covered

with the usual display of soldierly

gallantry. (MFB No. 658)

Millennium

Warner/Rank PES 90078

USA 1989 Price £10.21

Certificate PG Director Michael

Anderson

This miscast (Kris Kristofferson,

Cheryl Ladd), mishandled time-

twister comes on like a big-budget

episode of *Star Trek*. (MFB No. 670)

A Month in the Country

Warner PES 11836

UK 1987 Price £10.21

Certificate PG Director Pat O'Connor

★ A subtle, thoughtful adaptation

of J. L. Carr's novel about two

ex-servicemen who, haunted by

memories of the Western Front,

find solace in a little Yorkshire

village. (MFB No. 647)

Renegades

RCA/Columbia CVR 22100

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Jack Sholder

Two of the *Young Guns* (Lou Diamond

Phillips, Kiefer Sutherland) are

packed off to police the Philadelphia

streets. (MFB No. 674)

Sebastiane

MCEG Virgin Vision VVD 945

UK 1975 Price £14.00

Certificate 18 Directors Derek Jarman,

Paul Humfress



Dreams of the old rugged cross in 'The Garden'



Sixties blowout: Richard E. Grant, Richard Griffiths in 'Withnail & I'

★ Jarman's visually stunning first feature is an interpretation of the martyrdom of St Sebastian. Confronting issues of homoerotic passion and violence, it caused considerable controversy when it was screened by Channel 4. (MFB No. 514)

Soul Man

New World/High Fliers SNW 1020
USA 1986 Price £10.00

Certificate 15 Director Steve Miner
A law student dyes his skin black to gain a scholarship. It's hard to believe the disguise would fool anybody, but the script works by poking fun at racial stereotyping. (MFB No. 637)

The Spider's Stratagem (La strategia del ragno)

Connoisseur CR 039
Italy 1970 Price £14.99

Certificate PG
Director Bernardo Bertolucci
★ Adapted from a story by Jorge Luis Borges, this beautifully shot film intermingles Italian fascism and a man's obsession with his murdered father. Subtitles (MFB No. 516)

Tatie Danielle

Palace PVC 22185
France 1990 Price £14.99

Certificate 15
Director Etienne Chatiliez
Malevolent grandmother Tilla Chelton wreaks havoc on her petit-bourgeois relatives who take care of her. Chatiliez's satire pulls no punches in its attack on the hypocrisy of family values. Subtitles (S&S May 1991)

Three Men and a Little Lady

Touchstone D440 742
USA 1990 Price £12.99

Certificate PG Director Emile Ardolino
The 'cute kid' storyline is pushed to one side as Tom Selleck and Nancy Travis indulge in an on-off romance. Entirely forgettable. (MFB No. 687)

Withnail & I

Warner/MGM/UA PES 31111
UK 1986 Price £10.20

Certificate 15 Director Bruce Robinson
★ An affectionate look at the sordid 60s with Richard E. Grant and Paul McGann as two debauched aspiring actors. (MFB No. 649)

Retail premiere

Bad Girls' Dormitory

Odyssey 701
USA 1985 Price £10.20

Certificate 18 Director Tim Kincaid
Producer Cynthia DePaula Screenplay Tim Kincaid Photography Arthur D. Marks Music Man Parrish Lead Actors Carey Zuris, Teresa Farley 93 minutes
Young prisoners riot in a women's correctional facility. A thoroughly disreputable exploitation picture.

Chances Are

RCA/Columbia CVR 22056
USA 1989 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Emile Ardolino
Producer Mike Lobell Screenplay Perry Howze, Randy Howze Photography William A. Fraker Music Maurice Jarre Lead Actors Cybill Shepherd, Robert Downey Jr, Ryan O'Neal 104 minutes
Robert Downey Jr is reincarnated twenty years after his death and falls in love with his grown-up daughter. Wife and mother Cybill Shepherd doesn't look as confused as she should be.

The Chocolate War

Medusa/Polygram MED 11972
USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Keith Gordon
Producer Jonathan D. Krane Screenplay Keith Gordon, based on the novel by

Robert Cormier Photography Tom Richmond Lead Actors John Glover, Ian Mitchell-Smith, Wally Ward 99 minutes

A sadistic teacher encourages his pet gang of bullies to terrorise the other boys in a boarding-school. Full of nastiness.

Cross of Fire

Braveworld STV 2035
USA 1989 Price £10.20

Certificate 15 Director Paul Wendkos
Producer Leonard Hill Lead Actors John Heard, Mel Harris 180 minutes
★ The frightening true story of Madge Oberholtzer who paid with her life for resisting the lecherous and vicious advances of Ku Klux Klan leader David Stephenson.

Fighting Justice

RCA/Columbia CVR 21771
USA 1988 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Joseph Ruben
Producers Walter F. Parkes, Lawrence Lasker Screenplay Wesley Strick Music Brad Fiedel Lead Actors James Woods, Robert Downey Jr 104 minutes
★ First class courtroom thriller with Woods as a jaded lawyer who rediscovers his taste for civil rights when he gets involved in a dodgy murder case.

The Hunchback Hairball of LA

First Fun VA 30155
USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Jeremy Kagan
Producer Arnon Milchan Screenplay Allan Katz Photography Bojan Bazelli Music Joseph Vitarelli Lead Actors Allan Katz, Corey Parker 99 minutes
The great Quasimodo is hijacked and dragged off to become the butt of asinine sophomore humour on a Californian campus.

Kinjite see Charles Bronson
Collection Retail

Lady Beware

Polygram/Medusa MED 12042
USA 1987 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 Director Karen Arthur
Producers Tony Scotti, Laurence Taylor-Mortorff Screenplay Susan Miller, Charles Zev Cohen Music Craig Safan Lead Actors Diane Lane, Michael Woods 105 minutes
Urban thriller in which window-dresser Lane is menaced by window-shopping Woods. Another excuse for provocatively dressed females to fall prey to maniac males.

Last Resort

First Fun VA 30152
USA 1985 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Zane Buzby
Producer Julie Corman Screenplay Steve

Zacharias, Jeff Buhai Music Steve Nelson, Thom Sharp Lead Actors Charles Grodin, Robin Pearson Rose 76 minutes

From the writers of *Revenge of the Nerds*, a mercifully brief sojourn to a Caribbean beach resort where armed guerrillas lurk under palm trees.

Little Monsters

First Independent VA 30151
USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate PG Director Richard Alan Greenberg Producers Jeffrey Mueller, Andrew Licht Screenplay Terry Rossio, Ted Elliott Photography Dick Bush Music David Newman Lead Actors Howie Mandel, Fred Savage 97 minutes
Beginning as a friendly comedy about monsters found under the bed by two boys, this then turns towards nightmarish special effects and becomes more *Elm Street* than *Sesame*.

Messenger of Death

see Charles Bronson Collection Retail

Paramedics

First Fun VA 30154
USA 1987 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Stuart Margolin
Producer Leslie Greif Screenplay Barry Bardo, Richard Kriegsmann Photography Michael Watkins Music Murray McLeod Lead Actors George Newbern, Christopher McDonald 87 minutes
Ambulancemen on laughing gas go wild but somehow manage to expose a cash-for-corpses crime ring.

Twister

First Fun VA 30157
USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Michael Almereyda Producer Wieland Schulz-Kiel Screenplay Michael Almereyda, based on the novel *Oh* by Mary Robinson Photography Renato Berta Lead Actors Harry Dean Stanton, Suzy Amis, Crispin Glover 88 minutes
An eccentric Mid-Western family - lead by wacky millionaire Stanton - have little to do but bicker and board themselves up against passing tornadoes.

You Can't Hurry Love

First Fun VA 30153
USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 Director Richard Martini Producer Jonathan D. Krane Screenplay Richard Martini Photography Peter Lyons Collister, John Schwartzman Music Bob Esty Lead Actors David Packer, Scott McGinnis, Kristy McNichol, Bridget Fonda 88 minutes
Having moved from Ohio to LA, Packer signs up with a dating agency and proceeds to spin predictable yarns to attractive women.

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CÉLIA BERTIN

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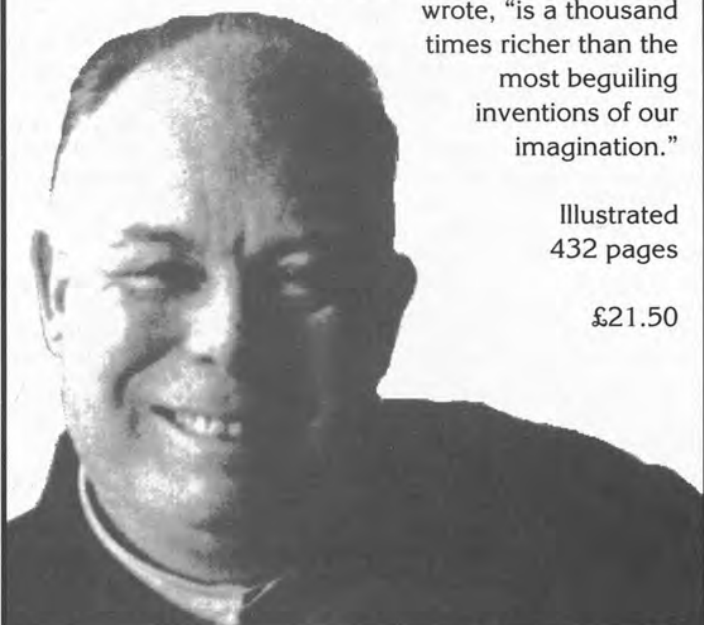
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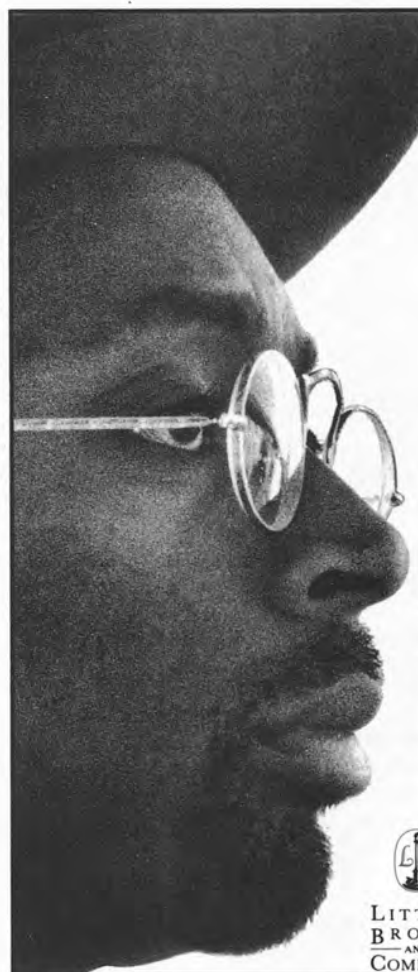
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ROUTLEDGE

Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL. Facsimile 071-436 2327

Video trickery

From Michael J. Sumpter

I would like to pick up on several points in Benjamin Woolley's confusing article on the differences between film and video editors (*S&S*, August). Having experience with both ways of working, it is simply untrue to say that while film editing is a creative process, video editing is purely "copying the bits you want from one tape on to another". Basically, they are simply two different ways of achieving the same goal – that is, making a cohesive film from its separately shot elements. A good video editor works from the same set of criteria as a film editor, with the same creative input, whether they are working on a TV play, commercial or pop promo.

For example, most pop promos are shot on film for better image quality (not video as stated, even when in the studio), and then the rushes transferred to and edited on videotape (as are many commercials). The video editor then works with the director in building the final piece, as a film editor would. Often this process utilises no manipulation of the film picture at all ("turning the screen into pieces of origami"), aside from the essential manipulation of images in time that all editing is concerned with – cuts, mixes, fades, etc. As transferring the film image on to tape retains the 'look' of film, the finished work will thus appear no different than if it had been edited on film.

Even when image manipulation of some kind is utilised in post-production (and film editors are in no way protected from the overenthusiastic VT engineer at this stage), for every example of video trickery that offends (not just) Mr Woolley's eye, I'm sure that there are just as many instances when video post-production effects have either slipped past him deliberately hidden or have, when utilised for a purpose, enhanced a film with integrity and with, yes, craft.

I am not holding up the torch of video technology over that of film. They are not directly comparable or mutually exclusive. The strength of film is in its quality as a medium – the strength of video is in its versatility as a process, or range of processes. But by using these strengths together, it is possible to make more than the best of each world.

Gender issues

From Amy Taubin

In response to Adam Whitmore's letter (*S&S*, August) objecting to my claim (*S&S*, July) that in *Bladerunner*, the Harrison Ford character programmes the sexuality of the Sean Young replicant, consider the dialogue of their first erotic encounter: She: Kiss me.

He: I want you.

She: I want you.

He: Again.

She: I want you.

Even someone who uses the term "human-

ity", as Whitmore does, to suppress issues of gender, should be able to understand what's happening here.

Skindeep merits

From Raymond Durnat

From my review of 1871 (*S&S*, August) a few key sentences got dropped, creating a general impression of enthusiasm for an enjoyable film. But as punctiliously as I acknowledged its skindeep merits, my lost punchlines preserved a balance embarrassing to lose. May I regain it by saying that McMullen's characters are about as alive as balloons with political propositions written on them, that his show lacks the warmth and subtlety normal in political musicals, from Joan Littlewood to *Evita*, that its dogmatically revisionist vanguardism deserves very vigorous contestation, that if British film culture had a New Right, 1871 would be a sitting duck for it, that it's another melancholy example of rigid radicalism lacking mainstream and popular sophistication, and that it misses by miles every target Virgin might have hoped to hit. (Thanks, I needed that.)

Jumble history

From Deirdre Gorman

Could any of your readers help with my research into the history of jumble sales?

Since starting in England in the 1890s, they have featured in songs, novels (E. F. Benson and Barbara Pym), an early TV play by Sue Townsend and even a 60s All Bran commercial. But so far I've been unable to find any trace of jumble or rummage sales in feature films.

Please send any information or suggestions to: 79A Sussex Way, London N7 6RU.

Politics of style

From Brian Dennis

The accounts offered (*S&S*, August) of *Young Soul Rebels*, were interesting and, perhaps understandably, concentrated on the film's real strengths. It is good to see a locally grown film with such confidence, style, important commitments, and willingness to think about the present and future rather than wallow in the past.

I was sorry to see, though, or rather disappointed not to see, some more detailed discussion of how the strengths of the film are bound up with what disappoints about it. This would not be in order to reveal the weaknesses of the film for their own sake, but rather to understand what the politics of the film permit.

First, in the discussion among Bhabha, Hall and Gilroy, there was a recognition both that style and fashion were important bearers of historical meaning within the film (as a corrective to the usual line that stresses politics as the prime bearer of meaning) and that the 'villain' of the piece, Ken, the white repressed gay, was insufficiently realised and could not bear the weight he needed to in the film's narrative. What wasn't drawn out in the discussion was the relation between the two: how the film's reaction to Ken's style – he wears a dreadful anorak – became a reason for fingering him as 'evil'. In short, the film had an aesthetic distaste towards what

one of the contributors called "shambling" Ken, and seemed to make this a basis for an ethical judgment. That seems to me one of the dangers of allowing an aesthetics to inform, or even dominate, a political position. Can you really read a sexual politics so easily out of style?

The second point is more substantive. One of the speakers at the National Film Theatre when I saw *Young Soul Rebels* mentioned that the Scots were given a raw deal within the film – seen as the clichéd drunken football supporters. That seemed to me true – and it was no less true of the film's representation of other white working-class figures. There were skinheads and the provincial young woman, none of whom was more than reactive within the film. What was at the centre of the film's transgressiveness was the relationship between the white middle-class, stylish art school SWP activist and the black stylish working-class DJ.

Now the class conjunction, middle class/working class, has a long pedigree even in sexual terms, most often seen from the middle-class point of view. The power of *Young Soul Rebels* is that it sees this relationship in new terms: the working-class figure is black; the relationship is seen from his point of view; he is not simply the object of middle-class desire.

But when all this is said – and these innovations are real progress – it remains the case that the cross-class relationship seems more possible to envisage than a relationship between two gays, one black, one white, within the working class (cf *My Beautiful Laundrette*).

Tongue-in-cheek?

From Daniel Waldron

Reading John Powers' article (*S&S*, August) I was more than a little bewildered by the comments of his Buenos Aires friend, who has just seen the rerelease of *Citizen Kane*.

I hope it was all tongue-in-cheek. If not, then it merely presents a picture of a person who has been put off by the hype surrounding Orson Welles' film, and has failed all these years to appreciate the film itself. Welles' "stylistic techniques" were always more than "mere schoolboy showing-off..." If there is one thing the current revival shows it is that these stylistic techniques were simply the best way to tell the story. No "alchemy" is involved.

It is not *Kane* that has "deepened and grown richer" over a space of fifty years, but the perceptions of the viewer – even one as benighted as John Powers' Buenos Aires friend.

Spot the difference

From Clare Tovey

I like John Powers' columns with their literary knowingness, but last month's (*S&S*, August) where he quoted from Pierre Menard took things too far. Menard – and why should Powers assume we know this – is a character in a Borges short story who wants to rewrite *Don Quixote* and does so, only to find that he has written the 'original' again, but it seems subtly different. I don't want to see Menard appear in some future critical book on Welles!



Crossing race and class:
'Young Soul Rebels'

What's in a name?

Benjamin Woolley

The apple is living up to its reputation as a symbol of temptation and danger. Try using it as a company name and you will soon discover why. The Beatles wanted to use it as the name of their record company. Steves Jobs and Wozniak, the inventors of the personal computer, wanted to use it as the name for their computer company. In 1981, both companies sought to dispense with any threat of ambiguity by agreeing that Apple Computers could keep its name just as long as it did not sell any music products. At the time, it was an easy deal to strike. Computers, after all, just crunched numbers.

Last October the music company listened to the learned corporate serpents and took a bite out of the computer company for breaking the 1981 agreement. The offence? Launching a 'midi interface' for the Apple Macintosh personal computer. The grounds? A midi interface is used to control electronic musical instruments such as synthesisers.

Whether or not this infringed the agreement is obviously a matter for very technical (and very lengthy and very expensive) legal debate. But it does demonstrate that the computer is no longer confined in its operations to the realm of text and numbers. Computers today are machines for manipulating and processing information of any sort: music, pictures, video, magazine articles.

"We've watched the banks trying to

become estate agents, and petrol stations trying to become supermarkets", reflected Angus Doulton, head of the National Interactive Video Centre (NIVC), an outfit set up to promote the technology he, like everyone else, was struggling to define. Multimedia or 'hypermedia' (a less restrained synonym) is usually described as some sort of 'tool' or 'business solution', which is not much help. As for what business problems these tools will solve, the most commonly cited example is 'education and training', a sure sign that no one is really sure what to do with them.

However, everyone agrees it must be very important because it combines the two things the information age is all about: computers and media. Computers process information; media are carriers of information. Ergo the future lies in some happy union of one with the other.

By 'media', however, multimediacs mean more than TV and radio. The telephone network, books, floppy disks, art galleries, invoice slips, smoke signals, electronic funds transfer systems, notched bedposts – and old Beatles LPs – all count as media. Multimedia, therefore, is about finding ways of combining the information a variety of media might carry. It is about using the computer to produce a new sort of media object – not a TV programme, nor a novel, nor an album, but a combination of any of these.

To confuse the issue further, multimedia is, in a sense, about the end of media. A medium is conventionally identified by



The telephone network, floppy disks, art galleries, invoice slips and notched bedposts all count as media

the physical device used to carry the information it communicates: a book, a record, a CD, television, film. Multimedia puts an end to that. The information could be coming from anywhere: a CD, a video, a computer disk, a dial-up database. And it could be going anywhere: to your hi-fi system, your television set, a laser printer, your midi synth and drumkit. Whichever, the quite deliberate purpose of the multimedia system is to make it impossible to distinguish which medium the information has come from and which it is destined for. The physical means of storage is rendered invisible. Everything flows through the same bitstream. The medium is not the message.

The result is a form of communication that is, we are told, more democratic because the old distinctions between consumer and producer dissolve. If, as a consumer, you navigate a 'database' of various different bits of information – an archive, say, of Beatles-related songs, newspaper cuttings, TV documentaries, films, critics' notices – the result of your straying paths of enquiry will be a view of that database's contents unique to you. Who, then, is the author of the resulting work – you, or the compiler of the database and the supplier of the means of accessing it?

These are not easy questions to answer. They raise complex issues. Much time and money will be spent trying to sort them out. And what good will it do? No one seems sure. Sounds like a job for the corporate lawyers.

Professor Potemkin's competition

Well you are a bunch of Europeans. The healthy flood of replies to our first two Missing Mug competitions dwindled to a trickle in July – and for three reasons, according to my esteemed colleague, media psychologist Dr Jacques Lantier. Our more sensitive readers were disturbed by the androgynous attire of the two characters displayed in the film still. A second group, the healthy philistines, apparently took fright at the foreign, intellectual-looking words written over the doorway. And the rest of you were, of course, abroad anyway, soaking up the sunshine on the beach and reading Georgette Heyer and Thomas Harris, or one of those awful books written by Englishmen about the delights of Provence – anything, in fact, but Sight and Sound. Shame on you.

I have some sympathy with this boycott. The film in question was 'La Nuit de Varennes' (1982),



a soggy plate of Eurosalad from the EC culture kitchen, made by Italians, funded by the French and seasoned with actors from as far afield as Berlin and Brooklyn. The scriptwriters had the witty idea of making a film about the French Revolution in which Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette do not appear. The English, wisely enough,

guillotined the idea of joining in this dog's dinner of a production.

Almost all our respondents wrote from the East End of London. Simon Linnell of Chingford ignored the background French lettering and patriotically suggested Barbara Windsor and Jim Dale in 'Don't Lose Your Head'. The scholarly Helen Kitson of Theydon Bois offered

Alida Valli and Pierre Brasseur in 'Le Dialogue des Carmelites'. Only M. R. Freeman of Walthamstow identified the correct cross-dressers – Marcello Mastroianni (in the white frou-frou number) and Hanna Schygulla (in the severe riding costume). Modesty forbids me to provide English subtitles to his caption "Mon Dieu, Monsieur Casanova, ça prend la moutarde!", but he wins a copy of 'White Zombie' all the same.

I expect a renewed flood of entries to this month's oh-so-easy competition. Unmask the actors illustrated, name the film, supply an appropriate caption, and you may win a videocassette copy of 'Miller's Crossing' released by Fox Video. Postcards by 15 September, please, to Professor Potemkin at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL (Or fax: 071-436 2327). Don't delay, do it today.



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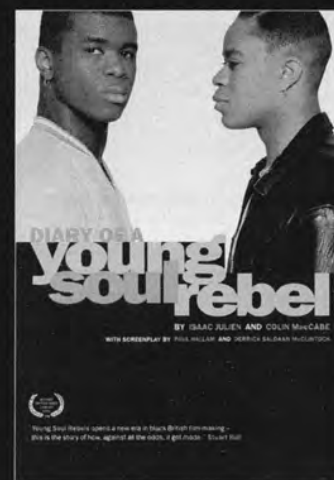
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